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TRUE WEST

April 1998
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By Bob Boze Bell

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April 1998, Volume 45, Number 4. TRUE WEST (ISSN 0041-3615) is published monthly by Western Publications, 205 W. 7th, Suite 201C, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076-2107. Single copies: $3.25, plus $1.75 shipping/handling. U.S. subscription rate is $27.95 per year (12 issues per year); $49.00 for two years (24 issues). Canada and Mexico, please add $5.00 per year to U.S. rate to cover extra handling and postage. All other non-U.S. countries, add $7.00 per year. Please provide payment in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank; personal checks, bank money orders, or cashier's checks drawn on foreign banks are not acceptable, nor is the national currency, unless the total payment is sufficient to cover all bank clearing and foreign exchange charges. Periodical postage paid at Stillwater, OK 74074, and at additional mailing offices.

Canadian GST Registration Number R132182866.

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Printed in the United States of America.

FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, ya'll!

I've been putting this off for some time, but I reckon it's time you were introduced to a new member of the animal kingdom. Actually, the beast in question is not that new, but zoologists have all but ignored it to date. It has the same temperament and tendencies as the canine, and many species fall under the general category of *Westicus Historiaus*, commonly referred to as the Western Historian, or W.H. for short.

Native to North America, specifically the western regions (although some appear as far away as Britain), the W.H. began with the Buntline, Siringo, and Garrett breeds. These spawned the Marvin Hunters, Lakes, Burnses, and various other purebreeds that left plenty of scraps for the future, but little evidence of an organized hunt.

Sometime after the Burns and Lake hounds vanished, a litter of pups, the Earpies, loosely formed to fight over the scraps left on the research bone. Fresh meat was still to be found, although the majority was quickly gulped down by the bulldogs leading the pack. That meat has long since been jerked and set aside for future consumption. It is guarded by snarling teeth and baited breath. But worry not, the Earpie bark is much worse than the bite. An amusing dog to watch for a moment or two, but you wouldn't want to be stuck in traffic with one for too long.

Another interesting breed spawned from the Burns, Garrett, and Siringo blood line is the *El Chivato Canino*, or Billy the Kid Chihuahua. The B.K.C. started as a few pups scoured the Southwest (and the archives of New York City), in a valiant attempt to polish the bones Garrett and his lot had unearthed.

Instead of snarling when approached, the Kid Chihuahuas sniff their opponents warily, then commence to lively discussions regarding the latest bone of contention. The scraps are shared equally and passed around for a quick taste. Some walk away with their tail between their legs, but most quickly join the pack and the hunt continues.

Although there are too many individual breeds to mention here, other members of the *Westicus Historiaus* family include the Texas pack, who howl at the moon at the mention of anything "non-Texas"; the Custer pack, who race up and down the hills of Little Bighorn literally looking for bones and answers to unsolved questions; the Collector pack, who enjoy lining the walls of their doghouses with history itself; the Wild Bunch pack, who roll over and kick their legs excitedly at the mention of "living to a ripe old age in Washington"; the Oklahombre Hounds, a small but faithful pack secure in the belief that half of the West's tough guys wouldn't have lasted two days in their territory; and of course, that lovable James Gang breed.

Although *Westicus Historiaus* have the ability to look like the average human being, they can usually be found nosing through dusty file cabinets in dim-lighted archives and libraries. They love curling up with a newspaper (provided it's at least one hundred years old), and phrases like "Pinkerton files" and "read the Notes first" slip into almost any conversation with ease. To ferret out a *Westicus Historiaus* at your next party, mention photo analysis and watch their eyes roll back in their heads as drool forms at the corners of their mouths. Or, pop a western movie into the VCR and watch them roll on the floor, laughing like a hyena.

Although I'll probably get my nose bit off for saying this, *Westicus Historiaus* provide the casual observer an almost comical ritual of burying and unearthing the same old soup bones, biting their own tails, and sometimes eating their own young. But more often than not, they do a damn good job of preserving the past for the future.

Now, if I stepped on any paws out there, remember that the next time we meet, the first round of kibble is on me.

Marcus Huff

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BOYER VS. TEFERTILLER

Editor's Note: The following letters arrived in the old mail pouch, further stirring the fires at various Wyatt Earp camps. I'll remain reticent regarding the Earp saga and the historians responsible, not because I prefer one side to the other, but because I think too much attention is being paid to the cooks, and not the food.

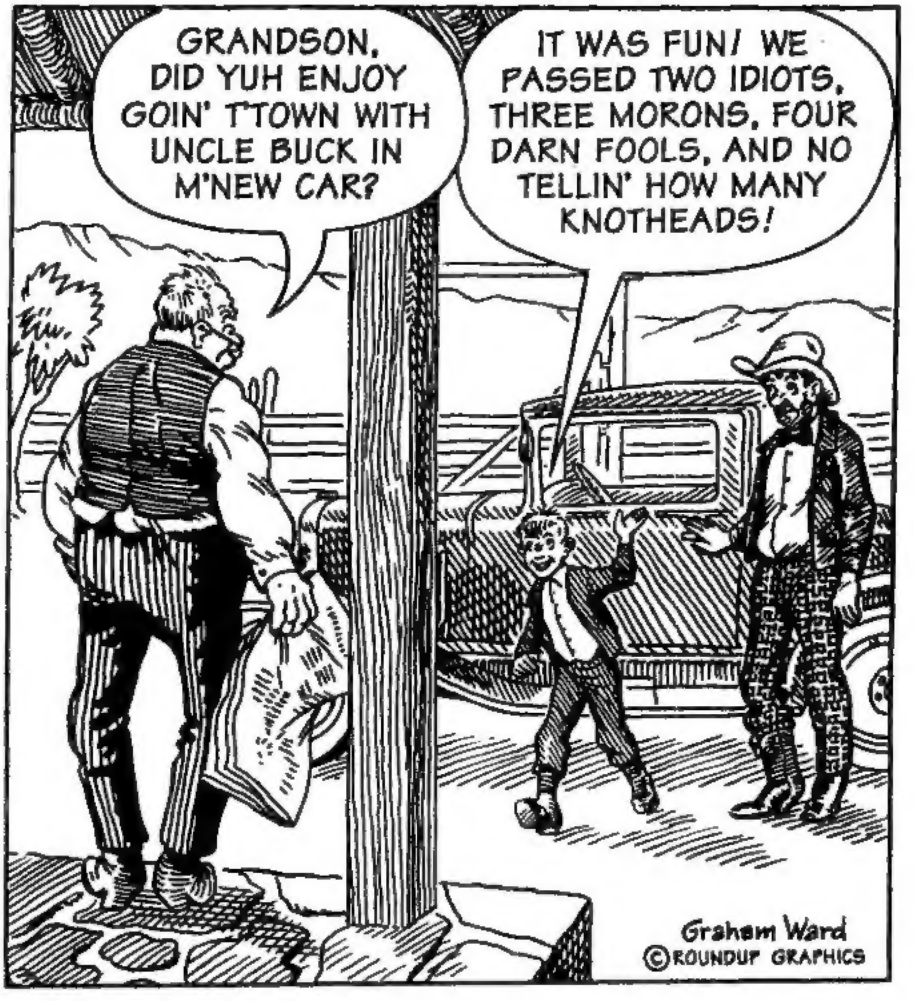
I am an avid reader and subscriber of your magazine and enjoy it very much. However, I took offense to Rick Miller's review of Casey Tefertiller's *Wyatt Earp, The Life Behind the Legend* in your February 1998 issue. I am not finding fault with Mr. Tefertiller's book, which I have read, but with Mr. Miller's remarks.

He states Paula Mitchell Marks and Mr. Tefertiller are the only two researchers that we are to lend any credibility to and that future discussion about the Earps must either dispute or corroborate Tefertiller's findings; and the final line, that is really out of line, is that Earp appears to have his champion in the form of Casey Tefertiller.

I can't believe that *True West* would publish such garbage when they ran, for fourteen months beginning in the August 1993 issue, a brilliant biography of Wyatt Earp by Glenn Boyer (of which I have all fourteen issues). Anyone who is seriously researching Wyatt Earp would have to consider Mr. Boyer the principle source. Glenn Boyer probably spent at least forty-five years of his life researching the Earp family. He became a family friend of the Earp brothers' descendants and collected and edited Josephine Sarah Marcus Earps' recollections of which he wrote, "I married Wyatt Earp." He also wrote *Wyatt Earp's Tombstone Vendetta* and was the first person to unmask the Boy Scout myth of Wyatt Earp with his 1967 publication, *The Suppressed Murder of Wyatt Earp.*

I could go on and on but I'm running out of paper so I will close with this thought: If Mr. Miller wants to put Casey Tefertiller as Wyatt Earp's champion, let Mr. Tefertiller do about forty more years of research on the subject and just maybe he could sit at the feet of Glenn Boyer who would be the first to say Wyatt Earp needs no champion, just facts, and they speak for themselves. — *Marlin Wertman, Muncy, Pennsylvania.*

SADDLE PALS **By Graham Ward**


GRANDSON, DID YUH ENJOY GOIN' T'TOWN WITH UNCLE BUCK IN M'NEW CAR?
IT WAS FUN! WE PASSED TWO IDIOTS, THREE MORONS, FOUR DARN FOOLS, AND NO TELLIN' HOW MANY KNOTHEADS!
Graham Ward
©ROUNDUP GRAPHICS

Editor's Note: Garbage? That's nothing. You should read the story we ran in the 1950s about Billy the Kid and Tom Horn playing poker together.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the OK Corral

I was invited to a literary conference in Phoenix Saturday night [January 3]. I was under the impression that it was to be a debate by two authors of Wyatt Earp books, one being Glenn G. Boyer, the other Casey Tefertiller, neither one of whom I have ever read or met.

I am not an Old West historian, nor an expert on Wyatt Earp, but I'd been looking forward to hearing an intelligent exchange of words and ideas on the subject. I have to say, since I didn't know much about either one of the authors, I had no

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preconceived notions on what to expect.

Early Saturday evening, my friend and I learned that Mr. Boyer was ill, and would not be attending the meeting. That was very disappointing, but we were assured that the conference would go on as scheduled. My friend proceeded to pay the $10.00 per person fee that was charged at the door.

An announcement was made that Mr. Boyer's stepson, Dan Coleman, was there to represent him. A decision had been made by the WOLA [Western Outlaw-Lawman History Association] board to have Vice President Jeff Wheatly [Wheat] read the introduction prepared by Mr. Boyer, rather than Mr. Coleman.

Mr. Tefertiller read his introduction first, bringing up some very interesting points about discrepancies in Mr. Boyer's research and reference materials. I was intrigued.

Then, during Boyer's introduction, read by Jeff [Wheat], I was appalled at the unprofessional behavior of Mr. Tefertiller. He was distracting, shaking his head in disagreement, rolling his eyes, and then laughing out loud, sarcastically. This set the tone for the whole evening.

I really was interested in the earlier points that Mr. Tefertiller had brought up, but the discussion kept drifting back to petty name calling. When Jeff [Wheat] opened the discussion for questions, Jeff Morey came up on the stage. From then on, Mr. Tefertiller answered very few direct questions about his knowledge of Wyatt Earp. Rather, he either deferred the question to Jeff Morey, or called Mr. Boyer a liar. I found him to be average and vague.

Jeff Morey, on the other hand, does have a lot of knowledge on the subject, and has obviously done some extensive research. Which leads me to wonder who really wrote the book?

I realized what was going on. Sour grapes about the fact that Mr. Boyer apparently owns a lot of valuable original documents, to which Mr. Tefertiller did not have access to during the writing of his book (therefore his conclusion that they do not exist?).

I wish that Mr. Boyer had been able to attend the conference so that I could hear what he had to say. In all fairness, Mr. Tefertiller may have some very valid issues that need to be addressed, but his unprofessional way of presenting these issues causes him to lose credibility.—*Kim Turner, via the Internet.*

Editor's Note: It's nice to see the opinions of an "outsider" to western history. We get so busy arguing about "first shots and frock coats" that we forget just how crazy we sound. Thanks for the letter.

Your letters and comments are welcome. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. All letters received by Western Publications will be considered for publication unless otherwise stipulated in the letter. Space does not permit us to print all letters we receive. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Be sure to include full name, address, and zip code. Photos are welcome. Address all letters to Western Publications, PO Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. E-mail us at, Western@cowboy.net. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose letters appear in "Truly Western."

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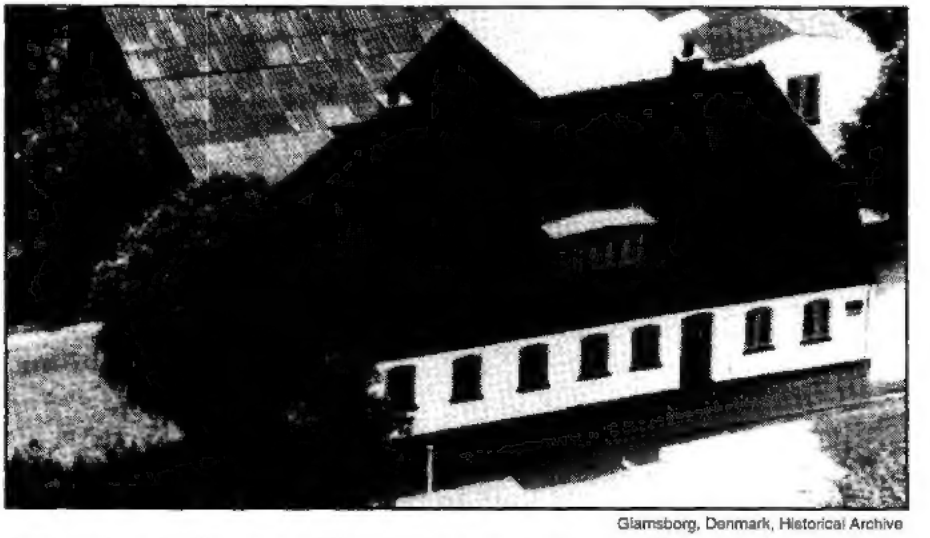
OUTLAW CHRISTEN MADSEN RORMOSE *ALIAS* LAWMAN CHRIS MADSEN

By Leif Ernst

Born in Denmark in 1851, Chris Madsen came to the United States in 1876. Madsen served as a United States deputy marshal for a total of twenty-years and, along with Bill Tilghman and Heck Thomas, gained fame as one of Oklahoma's legendary "Three Guardsmen." Over the years Madsen wrote several stories about his life, and was interviewed by dozens of newspapers. What Madsen never shared with the reading public, however, was his criminal career prior to coming to America.

As early as 1881 Madsen had written a letter to the Danish military magazine *Danebrog*. This letter was published June 4, 1881, as "Fem Aars Felttog paa Vestamerikas Praerier [Five Years Campaigning on the West American Prairies]." He also wrote to other Danish magazines about his military career in the United States army. In these documents he rarely said a word about the years he had spent in Denmark. Was it possible Chris was trying to hide something?

My interest in Chris was first aroused when I read about him more that thirty years ago in James D. Horan's *Pictorial History of the Wild West*, and in Paul Wellman's *A Dynasty of Western Outlaws*. In 1980 I contacted Madsen's only grandchild in Texas. Since that time I have visited with the Madsen family in the United States; they in turn have been my guests in Denmark. A number of documents concerning Madsen's life in the United States were generously made available to me by the family. The Madsens were very interested in learning more about Chris's early days in Denmark; the family especially wanted to identify the descendants of his half-brothers and sisters.



Glamsborg, Denmark, Historical Archive

Rormosehus, family home of Chris Madsen, on the island of Funen, Denmark. Built in 1851; demolished circa 1985.

Since there was so much information available about this man, it should have been a simple task to document Chris Madsen's life in Denmark. Unfortunately for many years this task proved to be almost impossible. Time after time, I tried to locate Madsen's roots in Denmark. I was about ready to give up the search for details of his early life, when Nancy Samuelson, a western historian from Connecticut, encouraged me to dig deeper.

Nancy has done a lot of research and writing about early Oklahoma lawmen and outlaws. Correspondence with her over the course of my own research has enabled me to distinguish between fact and fiction where Madsen was concerned.

One major problem in attempting to document Chris Madsen in Denmark was the fact that he did not tell the truth about where he was born. He always claimed he was born in the Danish province of Schleswig, an area that is now a part of Germany. It was not until 1995, after I made a visit to the Danish National Archives and other archives in Odense and Viborg, Denmark, that the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place.

Chris wrote or told any number of different versions of his life story. In 1921 *Med Sabel og Pistol, Christian Madsen's Levned og Oplevelser* [*With Saber and Pistol, Life and Experiences of Christian Madsen*] was printed in Danish by an Omaha, Nebraska, publishing house. Chris dictated *Four Score Years a Fighter!* to Harold L. Mueller and this was serialized in the Oklahoma City *Daily Oklahoman* from November 17, 1935, through March 15, 1936. Chris wrote another version of his life in Denmark, titled "Under Three Flags," around 1941. This manuscript, along with a number of letters and other documents, was made available to me by the Madsen family.

Chris said he was born February 25, 1851, in a house near the villages of Sankelmark and Oversee, south of Flensborg in the Danish province of Schleswig. His mother owned a house on the main thoroughfare between Hamburg, Germany, and Denmark. This house

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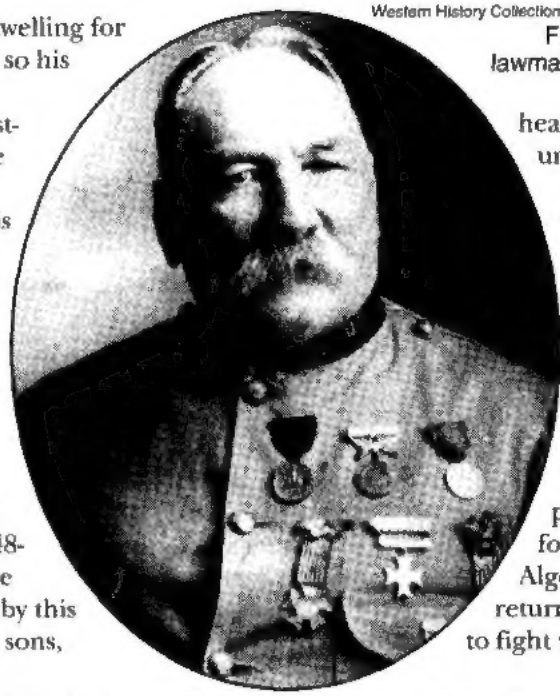


Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma
Famed Oklahoma lawman Chris Madsen.

One way Chris impressed his victims was to show them a medal of honor, the Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog. By using forged papers he passed himself off as a holder of this order...

was the only dwelling for miles around, so his mother was appointed postmistress of the local branch post office. His mother had four children by her first husband, Niels Nielsen. Nielsen died during the war between Germany and Denmark, 1848-50. There were four children by this marriage: two sons, Niels and Jorgen, and two daughters, Kirsten and Karen.

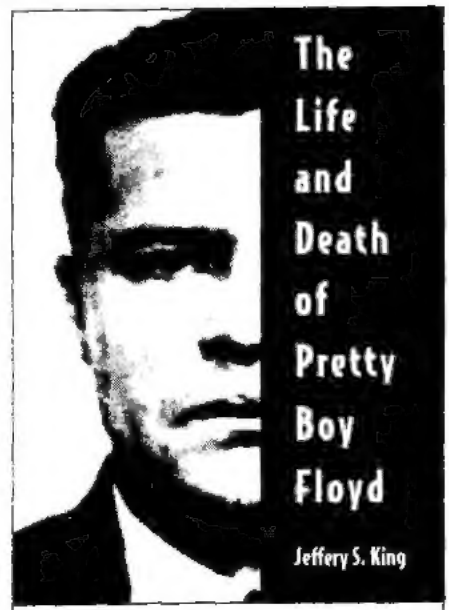
Chris's mother married again to Mads Christensen (Chris called him Christiansen), a noncommissioned officer in the Danish army. In accordance with the tradition of that time, the first-born son was given the name of his father in reverse order. Thus Chris became Christen Madsen (*sen* is "son of" in Danish). The siblings were named in the same tradition: Niels Nielsen, Jorgen Nielsen, Kirsten Nielsdatter, and Karen Nielsdatter (*datter* being "daughter of" in Danish).

According to Chris, when he was twelve, his father and his two half-brothers took part in the 1864 war between Germany and Denmark. In the decisive battle of Dybbol, April 18, 1864, Chris said his half-brother, Niels, was killed and his father was wounded. Schleswig, where Chris was born, was taken over by Germany. Soon after the war Chris was admitted to the military academy in Copenhagen. When he finished his education there, at the age of seventeen, he was assigned to the cavalry with the rank of corporal. Because of his excellent penmanship, he was detailed to serve in a headquarters unit.

In 1869 or 1870, Chris said he joined the French Foreign Legion for a period of either three or five years. During this period he fought in Algeria and then returned to France to fight under Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). Madsen claimed he took part in the Battle of Sedan in France, September 1-2, 1870. During this battle Chris was shot in the left ankle and had his right ear nearly taken off by the slash of a Hussar's sword. He was then captured and taken back to a prison hospital in his home province of Schleswig. He managed to escape but it took him four months, from September to Christmas, to get out of German-held territory and back into Denmark.

Chris claimed to have visited the palace of Amalienborg in Copenhagen where he spoke to the crown prince (later King Frederick VIII). The prince used his influence and helped Chris return to his old unit in France. There were stories that enroute back to his unit he fought with a group of irregulars called the Franc-Tireurs and with the forces of General Garibaldi, the Italian patriot.

After the war, Chris returned to duty with the Legion in Africa. He finally returned to his home in Schleswig in 1874, but because of his alliance with France he was banished from Schleswig. Chris then



THE LIFE AND DEATH OF PRETTY BOY FLOYD

Jeffery S. King

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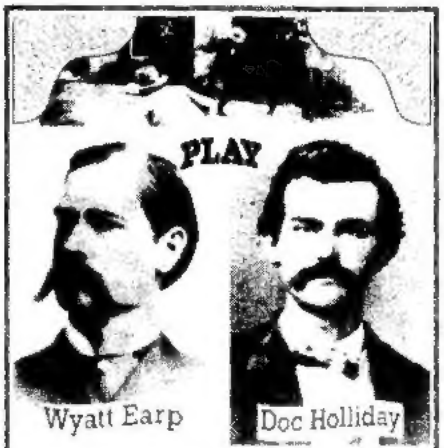

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headed for Norway. In that country he claimed to have worked for a year as a surveyor and helped lay out the railroad line between Drammen and Bergen in southwestern Norway.

In Norway, Chris made the acquaintance of a giant named "Major" Hansen who was more than eight feet tall. This man had served in an artillery unit in the Union army during the American Civil War. Hansen encouraged Chris to travel to the United States, and in December 1875 Chris sailed to New York. Three days after his arrival in New York City he enlisted in the Fifth Cavalry. When the examining army surgeon asked about the wound in his ankle, Chris told him he received it at the Battle of Sedan. The surgeon was duly impressed.

NOW FOR THE TRUTH: Chris Madsen was born February 25, 1851, in Rormosehus (*hus* is Danish for "house") located on the outskirts of the town of Orsted on the island of Funen. His parents were Mads Christensen, born 1810 in Barlose parish, Funen, and Maren Jorgensdatter, born 1802 in Orsted parish, Funen. This couple were married December 21, 1850, and lived in Rormosehus, a brick house built in 1851. The house did serve as the local post office for several years beginning in 1852. The house had a thatched roof, and an annex to the house proper was used as a cow barn and storage area for peat and fodder.

Mads Christensen worked as a day laborer and a postman. He never served in the Danish army. He died on November 4, 1874, in his home. Chris Madsen was the only child of the marriage between Mads and Maren. Maren had four children from her previous marriage to day-laborer Niels Nielsen. Nielsen died of typhoid fever August 31, 1849, in Orsted. The four children of this marriage were: Kirsten Nielsdatter (Rormose), born February 24, 1832; Niels Nielsen, born August 12, 1834; Jorgen Nielsen, born January 22, 1837; and Karen Nielsdatter, born August 26, 1839. It was common to use the name of a child's birthplace as a surname. In the 1845 census of Orsted parish, all four children are shown with the surname Rormose.

Chris's half-sister, Kirsten, married Thomas Nielsen, a twenty-nine-year-old farm hand, on November 15, 1862. Niels Nielsen was called for military service, but his unit did not participate in the Battle of Dybol. He died of tuberculosis on July 20, 1865. Jorgen Nielsen did serve as a soldier during the war in 1864, but did not participate in the Battle of Dybol. After the war he lived in Schleswig. Karen Nielsdatter married Hans Larsen in 1875. She died June 25, 1887.

Records show that Chris Madsen was baptized at home on April 21, 1851, by the parson; he was confirmed on April 23, 1865. The parson reported that Chris was "well-informed and well-behaved." Chris went to a folk high school at Kaslunde near his birthplace; he stayed at home about a year after completion. In May 1868, Chris left for Copenhagen, where he was employed by a wine merchant for about six months. He then worked as a coachman at Eremitagen Castle, north of Copenhagen, for a short time. When he left this job he roamed the island of Zealand and turned to begging to survive. He was arrested for vagrancy and sentenced to five days on bread and water.

After imprisonment, Chris went to Sweden for about three months. From there he went to Schleswig where he learned about "drainage." Back home again by September 1870, he was employed by Odense parish on another drainage job, digging ditches. He soon began roaming the countryside. Chris now made his living by "borrowing" money from rich acquaintances. He operated in the northern part of Jutland and was arrested in a market place just north of Aalborg. Again he was imprisoned. Upon his release, Madsen returned to Funen and continued to "borrow" what he needed to live on. He was arrested by the local police and sent to prison for the third time.

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The Danish newspaper *Berlingske Politiske og Avertissements Tidende* of August 17, 1874, described Madsen. In summary, the newspaper reported: After release in September 1873, he went to the northwestern part of Zealand and expanded his criminal activities to the entire island. Chris was very cunning and clever and his preferred victims were schoolteachers, parsons, counts, and other professional people. His victims even included a lawyer who was a member of the Danish parliament. One way Chris impressed his victims was to show them a medal of honor, the Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog. By using forged papers he passed himself off as a recipient of this honor by the name of Carl Christian Johan Andreas Daniel von Hoffmann. (A decorated officer with the same name did, in fact, participate in the war against Germany.) Chris also posed as a lance corporal, later as a corporal, and as a noncommissioned officer in the Royal Engineers. He claimed he had been awarded the medal of honor for saving someone from drowning. Chris attracted the sympathy of his victims by claiming his mother was sick and dying. If additional proof of identity was asked for, he provided forged documents. He often got from two to five Rigsdalere from most victims, and sometimes as much as seven to ten Rigsdalere. A farmhand of the time could earn an annual income of between fifty and sixty Rigsdalere.

In December 1873, Chris went to Sweden, and a bit later to Norway, where he employed the same methods of tricking people out of their money. In the town of Laurvig (today Larvik), Norway, he was foolish enough to attempt to pull his con on the local chief of police. The Copenhagen police were promptly contacted.

Chris visited a number of towns on his way to Trondhjem, Norway, where he acquired a good job as a civil engineer. He beat a hasty retreat from Trondhjem, however, when he saw a full description of himself on a "wanted" poster in a local restaurant. Once again he used

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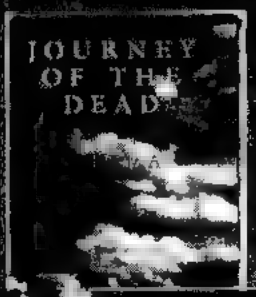

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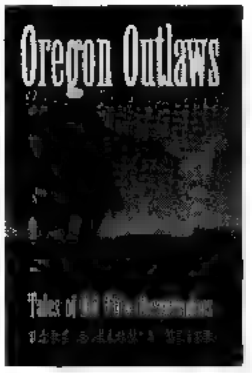

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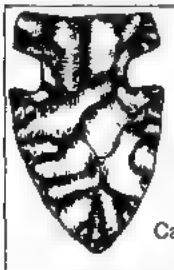

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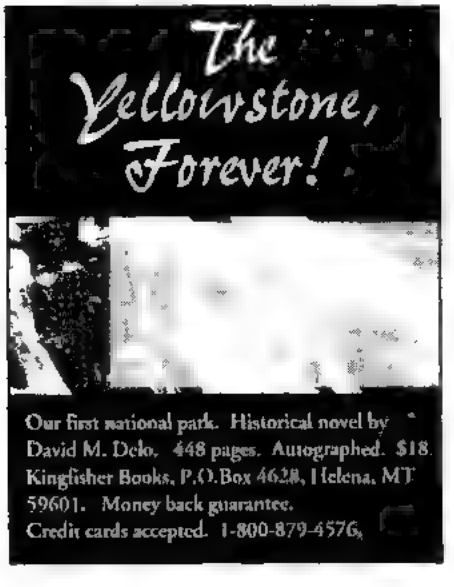

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his usual tales and smooth manner to talk a steamship captain into giving him free passage to Christiansand, Norway. In March 1874, his luck ran out again. Chris Madsen was arrested in Laurvig and turned over to the Copenhagen police.

Chris was described as being sixty-four and one half inches tall, with blue eyes, reddish hair, beard, and sideburns, and a normal stature. A small scar was recorded on his right leg. He was dressed in a black overcoat, oil-finished leather boots, and a dark green cloth cap. Pinned to his overcoat was the Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog, the Danish medal of honor.

Dozens of people fell victim to Madsen's cunning. When caught, he candidly admitted his crimes and declared that it had never been his intention to repay the "borrowed" money. Records of the judgments against him fill many pages. Some of his admissions appear to have been given in order to boast of his cleverness. The court records suggests that in the beginning, Chris did try to find honest jobs. When these attempts failed, he began to beg and then discovered how easily people could be talked into parting with their money.

A judgment on November 1871 resulted in a prison sentence of eight months. The records of this judgment pointed out the considerable number of frauds carried out in an especially cunning way. Also mentioned was his misuse of the Order of the Dannebrog in perpetrating these crimes. Judgment was weighed in favor of his youth, reports of former mishaps and ill fortune, and a candid admission of guilt.

Chris used one false document dated 1865 that stated he took part in the 1864 war against Germany as a dragoon and had been presented with the Order of the Dannebrog. He did not forge this document himself, but had met a forger in an inn who was preparing a similar document for his own use. The man made the additional document for Chris. Another document used by Chris had been annotated as "copy" in one corner. The "copy" had been rubbed out making the forgery look like an original.

During the period that Chris claimed to have been in the French Foreign Legion, 1869-1875, he was, in fact, in and out of Vridsloselille State Prison. Chris probably did actually met Crown Prince Frederick. This meeting occurred in Vridsloselille Prison, too. The crown prince made a tour of inspection at the prison on January 16, 1872. Possibly Prince Frederick helped Chris, not in his efforts to get to France, but back into his cell!

Vridsloselille State Prison in Copenhagen opened on December 5, 1859. The organization of this facility was based on a system of "total seclusion" developed by the Quakers in North America. A description of the operation of the prison was published in *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* [Nordic Journal of Criminal Science] 1959-60: "Food is served to the prisoner in his cell. The prisoner carries out his work in his cell. He has a plank bed and toilet. When taking exercise, the prisoner walks a distance of fifteen paces ore from the other with caps pulled down to conceal the face from fellow prisoners. The cap has two holes for eyes and is pulled up again when back in the cell. The prisoners could receive schooling, attend church and visit the library. However, all such activities took place in small stalls so that the prisoners had no contact with one another."

Chris Madsen received the following sentences to Vridsloselille Prison: May 31, 1869, begging and vagrancy, five days on bread and water; May 15, 1871, fraud, 4 x 5 (four separate five-day stretches) on bread and water; November 24, 1871, vagrancy, forgery and fraud, eight months; January 15, 1873, forgery and fraud, one year; August 14, 1874, forgery and fraud, two years.

There are a number of comments in the Supplementary Rosters of the prison concerning Chris Madsen. There was a classification system for prisoners, class one to six, with six

being the worst criminals. Chris was classifiied as a fifth category criminal. The records generally agree that he was an intelligent and artful scoundrel who had no intention of changing his ways. One comment about his character stated that it was commonly thought [by prison officials] that Madsen was a ne'er-do-well, and he had therefore been held in the lock-up for five days in each of seven weeks. His later career confirmed the judgment. He continued to carry out his fraudulent behavior with an unheard of impudence and indifference to the consequences.

It was further stated if he was not sent away upon completion of his punishment but remained in Denmark, he would not change his former conduct. This last statement implies that Madsen's passage to the United States had been paid. It appears to have been a common practice to ship habitual criminals out of Denmark. The American authorities complained several times to the Danish authorities of this practice

During his time in prison Chris was employed as a cork worker, making bottle stoppers and other cork products. Chris may have made the acquaintance of two other prisoners, Socialists Louis Pio and Poul Geleff, who were also deported to America. There is evidence that Louis Pio received 10,000 Kroner in "traveling expenses," a fortune at that time. Geleff was also employed as a cork worker and almost certainly knew Chris. Pio later attempted to establish a socialist settlement in Kansas. When that enterprise failed, he went to Florida where he established White City. This settlement later became an "Eldorado" for millionaires. In 1921 Pio's ashes were shipped home to Denmark. Geleff later returned to Denmark and continued his socialist activities.

How Chris Madsen actually traveled to the United States is not known. He did not travel on a Danish ship. There were separate records kept by the Copenhagen police for "direct" and for "indirect" emigrations. Those who emigrated directly sailed from Copenhagen. The indirect emigration took place from various other harbors in Europe. It is more than likely Chris traveled on a German ship.

Many of the stories Chris told in his memoirs and newspaper interviews often contained a slight degree of truth; however, he changed dates, places, and events enough to conceal his past and to protect himself. For instance, his story about how he escaped from prison near his birthplace in Schleswig may be somewhat true. He was not born there, but he did spend some time in that province. His half-brother Jorgen Nielsen lived there, and Chris may have had some conflict with the law while visiting that province.

There was in fact a Norwegian giant named Ole Andreas Hansen. He did enlist in the Thirteenth New York Heavy Artillery and serve in the American Civil War. Hansen's military records indicate that he served as a private, but he was only six feet, nine and one half inches tall. Chris may possibly have met this man in his travels. (Danish measurements are not the same as U.S. measurements. One Danish inch is equal to 1.0297 U.S. inch. This variance of measurement could account for some difference in Madsen's description of Hansen, and the difference in the descriptions of Chris himself in Danish prison records and U.S. military records.)

Numerous stories told by Chris Madsen, one of the Three Guardsmen of Oklahoma fame, were not printed until he was more than seventy years old. By that time, most of those who could have either confirm or deny the stories had died. Chris had repeated these tall tales so many times that he probably believed them himself.

Leif Ernst is a researcher for the Danish Demographic Database and for the Danish-American Emigrant Museum in Aalborg, Denmark. This is his first article for True West.

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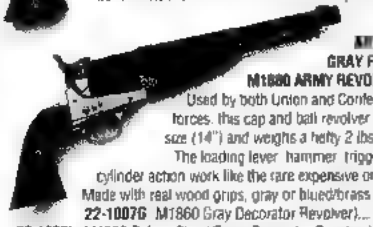

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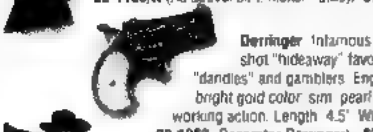

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The Captivity of Olive Oatman

By Roy O'Dell & Barbara Hegne

Royce Oatman had a forboding feeling of doom, a feeling he could no longer hide from his wife and seven children. Other wagon train members had decided to stay at Tucson, Arizona, but Royce was impatient to get to Yuma. He left Tucson early in March 1851, and after days of impassable roads and frequent unloading and hand pushing the wagon to the top of every hill, Royce sank to the ground. He cried the words of a beaten man, "Mother, in the name of God, I know that something dreadful is about to happen."

Mrs. Oatman tried to encourage her worried husband, but he seemed too distracted to listen. That night sixteen-year-old Lucy heard her father crying bitterly in the wagon. He was alone and thought no one could hear him.

Royce had been sure he could make it to Fort Yuma, especially if he traveled by moonlight. Not only would the family be safe from Indians, but their animals would fare better.

Camped near the Gila River, seventy miles from Fort Yuma, Royce threw the last bundle of baggage on the wagon. Then Lorenzo's excited voice drew the family's attention to a band of Apache Indians coming into camp. The children knew the Apaches were a fierce breed, and although Royce tried to act unemotional, the fear in his voice was plain. He knew his next move meant life or death for himself and his family.

Royce Oatman was born in New York as were his two cousins, Harvey and Harrison Oatman. The Oatman clan migrated to Illinois in 1850. Talk of opportunities farther west was on everyone's lips. Harvey and Harrison were interested in going to Oregon Territory, but Royce had been suffering health problems and thought the climate farther south would be better. He joined a group headed to the new Mexican territory to begin a settlement.

Courtesy of Barbara Hegne

This photo of Olive Oatman, taken around 1860, clearly displays the prominent tattoos applied to her face by Mohaves

Fifty members of the wagon train left Independence, Missouri, August 10, 1850. The Oatman family consisted of forty-one-year-old Royce, his wife, Mary, thirty-eight; Lucy, sixteen; Lorenzo fourteen; Olivia (Olive), thirteen; Mary Ann, seven; Royce, Jr.; C.A.; and a "baby brother."

The group started out in good spirits, but it wasn't long before disagreements split the train. Some took the northern route and the others, including the Oatman family, took the southern route.

By the time the southern-bound wagons reached the Rio Grande, Indians had stolen two of Royce's horses and twenty head of stock from the rest of the families. At Tucson, most of the group decided to stay. The Oatmans, Kellys, and Wilders pressed on toward the next village.

While the wagon train was enroute, Indian problems increased in the West. An article in the *Alta California* warned of an impending war. Of course, the Oatman wagon train would not have seen the article, printed in January 1851. It read in part:

> The bickerings between the Indians and whites, which at first with an ordinary degree of tact and ability, tempered with justice, might have been silenced, and subsequent difficulties been avoided, have at length reached a point when very effective measures must be pursued. There is no doubt that the mountain tribes have at length assumed a hostile position and are in sufficient numbers to keep at bay any weak parties of our people who may march against them. Being thoroughly acquainted with the mountain passes, they possess great advantages over most of the whites who

are disposed to take part in the foray against them...we, therefore, anticipate much trouble where the present warlike demonstrations shall be quieted

The settlement of the whites in the plains and vallies [sic] has necessary driven the game from the old grounds whence the Indians derived their supplies. Of course, they attribute their threatened starvation to the presence of the whites, and reasoning as they have ever reasoned, since our ancestors came into their country, they very naturally conclusion that if they could exterminate the whites the old condition of things would return. Meanwhile thefts and robberies have been committed by them and retaliations have followed. They have stolen horses and mules for food, the latter being considered by them most exellent.

The trip was difficult and many Apaches were seen on the horizon. On February 16, 1851, tired and discouraged, the wagons rolled into a Pimole Indian village. The Kellys and Wilders decided to stay and wait for assistance. Royce believed it was just as dangerous to stay as to press on the 190 miles to Fort Yuma. A Dr. Le Conte, and his guide, arrived at the Pimole camp. They had just come from Yuma and told Royce they had seen no Indians and had made the trip in fine order.

Although their provisions were low, Royce decided "with God's protection" to chance the trip. On March 11, 1851, the Oatmans started out. They suffered many hardships on the trail and Royce began to show signs of despair. Olive Oatman later wrote of her parents' distress. "I shal[l] never forget the sad look of my Father and Mother as those dark clouds gathered around them. They seemed to comprehend the perils of the way & danger threatening themselves & their helpless offspring."

Mrs Oatman was better able to hide her fears and patiently attend to the family needs, but when the nineteen Apaches surrounded their

National Archives

These Apaches paused, or posed, long enough to have their photo taken by T.H. O'Sullivan in 1873

camp site, even she was terrified.

The Indians asked for pipe and tobacco, and Royce smoked with them in peace and friendship. Then, they asked for food. Royce explained his food supply was low, but he gave them some bread. When the Apaches demanded more food, Royce said no, that he didn't have enough to feed his family. The Indians quickly gathered and began to talk in their own language and make expressions that scared the children.

Suddenly the Apaches gave a deafening yell and began to attack. Olive later wrote:

As an Indian was taking me to one side, I saw them strike Lorenzo down and in an instant afterward my father also. I was so bewildered and surprised that it was some little time before I could realize the full horror of the situation. When I turned around and collected my thought, I saw my father, my own dear father, struggling, bleeding and moaning in the most pitiful manner. Lorenzo was lying with his face in the dust

Map by Barbara Hegne

Eagle Point Historical Society

A Pima Indian village near Phoenix, Arizona, 1886.

> with the top of his head covered with blood. I looked around and saw my poor, dear mother lying on the ground with the baby clasped in her arms; both of them were still as if the work of death had been completed.
>
> I then heard my poor bleeding, mangled Mother utter a moan & I sprang wildly towards her. The Indian standing over me snatched me back & lifted his club and threatened me.

After the Indians killed the other members of the family, they herded Olive and seven-year-old Mary Ann ahead of them, making the girls walk barefooted day and night. When Mary Ann fell and could walk no longer, they beat her. When Mary did not respond one Indian threw her over his shoulder and packed her to their camp, 200 miles from the massacre site.

Arriving at the camp, the girls were put on a pile of brush while the Indians danced, shouted, and spit in their faces. This first night would be one long remembered. Olive later wrote of the brutality, "With bleeding feet-torn skirts-chilled with cold, we were placed upon a bundle of sticks, while these fierce, laughing, whooping wretches form a circle about us." The girls were terrified that they would be killed, and Olive offered a silent prayer: "O Father we claim thy promises." Olive's heart was burdened hearing the sighs Mary Ann moaned for their dead father and mother. Olive's own sufferings were forgotten in sympathy for her little sister.

Olive and Mary Ann were eventually made slaves. Apache children would make them work, and if the girls didn't do as they were told, the Indian parents would beat them.

After about a year, the girls were sold to Mohave Indians. The girls were tattooed on their chins and arms. If they ever ran away they would be recognized by other tribes as Mohave slaves.

Food was scarce and a terrible famine struck the Mohave tribe. Several Indian children died, and Mary Ann grew so weak she could not get up to search for food. Olive prayed daily that her sister would live, but Mary Ann's condition did not improve. There were times when little Mary Ann would ask Olive for food when Olive had none to give. She told Olive, "you ought not to labor to keep me alive; I am willing to die, I shall soon be where Father & Mother have gone, to that better world." Olive would then sing Mary Ann's favorite hymn with the words, "There is a happy land far, far away...."

The Indians asked Mary Ann if she wanted to die and she told them that she did, that she would soon be with her dead family. The night Mary Ann died the Indians gathered around. It was a solemn sight as Mary Ann sang a hymn in a crystal clear, soft voice almost all the way through. Then she closed her eyes for the last time. Even the Indians were sorrowful over the death of the child, so much so that they granted Olive her request to bury, instead of burn the body as was their custom.

Olive thought this was the last of her family, but unknown to her, Lorenzo did not die in the Indian attack. He had only been wounded and he had been searching for his sisters for years.

That fateful massacre day, Lorenzo had been struck on the head and left for dead. Two Indians went through his pockets, took his shoes and hat, and dragged him to a spot where they left him for dead. Lorenzo could not see or stand up, but he could hear the terrible massacre that was happening around him. He knew the Indians had taken Olive and Mary Ann. It was some time before Lorenzo could manage to walk. He could not bear to look on the horrible massacre scene of his dead family. He started out, racked with pain, trying to retrace the wagon trail. Smelling his blood, a pack of wolves followed him, but Lorenzo was able to yell and scare them away.

After heat-filled days of stumbling around, Lorenzo saw something moving along the distant horizon. He was sure it was Indians, but as they got closer he recognized covered wagons. To his joy, the first wagons were those of the Kellys and Wilders. When Lorenzo told his story, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Wilder went to the massacre site and buried the six dead members of the Oatman family.

Lorenzo was taken to Fort Yuma, where he vowed to find his two sisters. Little did he realize the long wait ahead.

Five years later, a Yuma Indian named Francisco came into the Mohave camp looking for Olive. The Mohaves were distressed and became agitated with his questions. Some wanted to kill Olive, but others believed that would bring too

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much trouble. The Mohaves warned Olive to not talk to Francisco and hid her from him. Francisco left the camp, but he knew Olive was there and he was determined to return.

The *Alta California* of January 1, 1856, mentioned Francisco's discovery. The newspaper had copied its story from the *Los Angeles Star* and much of the report was in error:

> It will be remembered by many of our citizens and the emigrants by the Southern route in 1851, that Mr. Oatman, wife and five or six children, were found murdered on the Gila River, and supposed to have been done by the Yuma Indians. The bodies of all the family were found with the exception of the two oldest girls, and which according to a communication in the Southern California of last week, are supposed to have been carried into captivity, and are living not with the Yumas as at first believed, but with the Mohaves. One of Capt. Washburn's surveying party, just in from the plains, says the girls alluded to were still living among the Mohave Indians as recently as last summer as stated but one of Walker's men, by the name of Frank, and that both of them are married to chiefs of that tribe. Mr. Oatman, the brother is desirous of raising a party to go out and effect the freedom of his sisters from Indian bondage. We are pleased to learn that some generous spirits have already volunteered to accompany him, in accomplishing this praiseworthy an object.

The Mohaves tried to discourage Francisco, but he told them many whites would come and attack them. The Indians demanded horses, blankets, beads, and money as ransom for Olive. When the deal was made, Olive was allowed to go with Francisco and they began a 250-mile walk. Olive later expressed her feelings of leaving her present life for a new one: "Ancious [sic] as I was to regain my liberty; yet I could not leave the wide mountain home without a struggle. Every stream and mountain peak & shaden glen, I was as familiar with as with the dooryard of my childhood home." The one place Olive hated to leave was the Mary's grave. This was a sacred place to her, where she had clung to the last of her loving family.

Olive arrived at Fort Yuma among the shouts and cheers of the soldiers. It had been five years and seven months since the Oatmans had left Missouri.

The *Los Angeles Star* reported Olive's arduous trip to Fort Yuma.

> She travelled on foot three hundred miles in ten days, accompanied only by the Indian guide, Francisco, threee days of which they were entirely without food of any kind. In course of their route down the valley of the Colorado, they were frequently obliged to swim the river to make "cut offs." At one time they made rafts of tules, and for several hours floated down the river, but the wind blowing strong against them, they abandoned this mode of traveling and continued their journey by land. On her arrival at Fort Yuma her feet were very sore from the fatiguing journey, but otherwise she was in excellent health

The *Star* also told of Francisco's return:

> On the 28th January last, Mr. Henry Grinnell, an employee in the quartermaster's department at this Post, who understands the Yuma language, informed me that "Francisco," a Yuma Indian, living in this vicinity among the "Mohave Nation of Indians," about ten days travel from his Post, and that under certain conditions, and for certain considerations, he would go for her and bring her to Fort Yuma. I immediately directed him to go for her. He has now complied with his promise, by bringing her to Fort Yuma, this 22nd day of February, 1856. She is now taken care of here.

Olive's heart was full of joy, but more joy was yet to come, for she didn't know, until she reached Fort Yuma, that Lorenzo was still alive. When she heard about Lorenzo her ears couldn't comprehend such wonderful news and she fell unconscious. She didn't believe he was alive until she saw him face to face.

When Lorenzo came to the fort it was such a joyful meeting between brother and sister that it was almost an hour before either could speak. Olive would later remember that emotional reunion.

> The past came looming up; the checkered past, with childhood & its sunny visions, the toils & anxieties, of almost a years journeying over the plains & among the mountains, the blo[o]dy butchery of that night, when the wailing & praying of a defenseless family-strangely commingled with the fiendish yells & horrid blows of nineteen infuriated savages.
>
> All this taken in connection with five years of tears & hunger, came rushing in upon the memory with such overwhelming power at our meeting, that language failed us; for our souls were stir[r]ed with indescribable emotions.

Newspapers across the country wrote and copied everything they could about the rescue of Olive Oatman. The March 24, 1856, *Alta California* reported:

The Indians demanded horses, blankets, beads, and money as ransom for Olive. When the deal was made, Olive was allowed to go with Francisco and they began a 250-mile walk.

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Miss Oatman, the young lady of whom mention was made in our last issue; as having been released from a captivity of five years' duration among the Mohaves, was still at the Fort, but would be brought to San Diego on the return of the Government train—Hon. D. B. Kurtis, County Judge, having applied to Col. Burke for permission to have the young girl for the purpose of placing her in the charge of Mr. Thomas Collins [Mr. Ira Thompson] of this place, the wife of whom came across the plains in company with Miss Oatman and her parents, but who was more fortunate and escaped their sad fate. With Mrs. Collins [Thompson] she will find a good home, a kind and attentive companion, and under her care and instruction will shortly be able to resume that position in society which five years of savage bondage has deprived her. We learn that Miss Oatman is fast acquiring that knowledge of her native language, which during her captivity she had well nigh forgotten.

Ten days later Lorenzo arrived. The *Alta California* of April 4, 1856, commented that:

Lorenzo D. Oatman, accompanied by his sister, arrived in the Monte from Fort Yuma on Sunday last. For the satisfaction of inquiring friends, we would state that Miss Oatman is in good health, and during her long captivity, has invariably been treated with that civility and respect due her sex. She has not been made a wife, as has been heretofore erroneously reported, but has remained single, and her defenseless situation entirely respected during her residence among the Indians. She is very grateful to Lt. Col. Burke for his fatherly kindness, and to the other officers at the Fort for the kind treatment which herself and brother received whilst there, to Mr. Henry Grinnell, for his sympathy, aid and voluntary services is she also indebted for her rescue.

The ladylike deportment of Miss Oatman, her pleasing manners and amiable disposition, is the wonder and remark of all those who see her. She fully realizes that she is an object of curiosity, and exhibits far more delicacy than many who although they pretend to the usual quantum of politeness and civility, rush to see her and stare at her, with about as much sense of feeling as they would to a show of wild animals. She has no objection to be seen, and converses fluently in her native tongue with those who treat her kindly, finding many intresting particulars of her captive life.

The *Los Angeles Star* went to Ira Thompson's home and conducted an interview with Olive. One of the most complete interviews, the story filled the front page of that newspaper on April 19, 1856:

"So much intrest [sic] has been manifested in the story of the captivity of Olive Oatman, that we visited her a few days since, when she gave us an intelligible account of her adventures, which is here embodied. This account we obtained only by asking questions, as her timidity and want of confidence prevented her from giving the details unassisted, her faculties have been somewhat impaired by the way of life, but her friends assured us that in the short time she has been among them she has made very perceptible improvement.

"Olive has found good friends at the Monte, in the families of Mr. Ira Thompson and Mr David Lewis and is regarded and treated as a member of their families.

"The Oatmans started from Iowa in company with the family of Mr. Thompson, with whom they travelled together as far as Tucson, in Sonora, where Mr. T. resolved to lay by to recruit his cattle and wait for other trains to come up, so as to insure the safety of the road by numbers. But the Oatmans pushed on, impatient to get through, and met their fate on the Gila, about two hundred miles from the Colorado. While at Tucson the Thompsons had many opportunities of noticing the terror which the Apaches excited in the People. One evening a Spanish woman arrived in the village, saying she had just escaped from the Tonto Apaches, where she had been a prisoner. She related that a day or two before, the band returned to camp from killing and plundering a party of Americans, and also bringing in prisoners. She was left alone with the threat that if she attempted to escape she would be killed. That night while they were dancing the war dance, she escaped and returned to Tucson. By comparing dates they were satisfied this was the band that attacked the Oatmans. Inquiries were made at the time, but nothing could be learned concerning the captives.

"Olive is rather a pretty girl, with a skin as fair as most persons who have crossed the plains. Her face is disfigured by tatooed lines on the chin, running obliquely and perpendicularly from her mouth. Her arms were also marked in a similar manner by one straight line on each. The operation consisted in puncturing the skin and rubbing a dye or pulverized charcoal into the wounds.

"It was about sunset when the attack was made, which resulted in the capture of herself and her little sister, Mary Ann. Olive was thirteen, and Mary Ann seven years of age. The Indians stripped her of her shoes and nearly all her clothing—her sister had no shoes on at the time—and they started off with the speed of horses in a northerly direction into a mountainous region. They travelled all night without resting. At noon next day they stopped a few minutes to breathe and then hurried on again until night-fall, when they came into camp. She thinks they travelled a hundred miles. She was barefoot, and the sharp stones lacerated her feet, and her blood sprinkled the whole distance. Whenever she lagged, they would come behind and beat her, to urge her on. Her sister soon gave out, but being small, the Indians carried her in their arms. The reason of their hurrying on so rapidly, was fear lest they might be pursued.

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"The clothes left to her were worn out, and fell from her back in two weeks, and then she matted together the bark of trees and tied it around her person like the Indians. It was a slight covering, but it did not leave her entirely exposed.

"Among the Apaches Olive supposes they remained one year. At any rate, the same kind of season returned as that when she arrived. Time among the Indians is not noted. If they note it at all, it is only by moons. The country was mountainous, and barren of grass or timber. The Indians live in the small vallies [sic]. The girles [sic] were treated cruelly by these Indians. They were overtasked, and when they could not understand what was said to them, they were beaten. There was no timber nor running stream. The only fuel to be had was scattered sage bushes, and when it rained the water would collect in the holes of the rocks, and these two little girls were compelled to pack all the wood and water from long distances upon their backs. They felt themselves to be slaves. The Indians told them they should never see their friends again, and concealed them as much as possible. There was no snow, but they suffered from cold in the winter.

"The Mohaves and Apaches were friends and sometimes visited each other. It was during one of these visits that the Mohaves learned of the captives and offered to purchase them. The Apaches consented and received in exchange a few pounds of beads, two horses, and two blankets. They were ten days travelling, 'like horses' as she describes it, to the Mohave villages, barefoot and over rough mountainous country, each day stopping a short time at noon to rest. She thinks they travelled 350 miles in a north-west direction. On this journey they ate nothing until the fourth day, when they received a piece of meat about as large as her hand, and this kept them alive. There were no roots nor berries, and they dared not ask the Indians for food. The Indians would kill such game as came in their way, but they did not offer it to their captives. She describes them as being too lazy to excert [sic] themselves to produce food, and only killing such game as chance brought to them. Her days had thus far been dark, and she was almost ready to despair. No act of kindness, nor a word of sympathy or hope had been addressed to her by her captors, who treated her and her sister as slaves.

"Arrived among the Mohaves, the Chief, whom she calls Espanesay, took them into his own family, and

Courtesy of Barbara Hegne

Abigail Clark Taylor. Olive Oatman stayed with the Taylor family after her rescue.

they were treated in every respect as his own children. Two blankets were given to them for covering; food was divided with them, they were not obliged to labor, but did pretty much as they pleased. Lands were allotted to them, and they were furnished with seeds, and raised their own corn, melons and beans as the Indians did.

"The Mohaves always told her she could go to the white settlements when she pleased, but they dared not go with her, fearing they might be punished for having kept a white woman so long among them, nor did they dare to let it be known that she was among them. She could not go alone, for she did not know the way, and she despaired of ever again seeing her friends. Hope almost died within her. For three long years she mourned her captivity—though well treated she was restrained, for she knew not how to extricate herself. What were her sensations, during all this time, must be imagined; for she is not as yet, able to express her thought in language.

"Before the arrival of the Indian messenger charged to release her, she heard of his departure from the Fort, by an Indian runner. Her joy was very great, but she forced herself to appear indifferent, lest the Indians should still restrain her. She had little confidence in their sincerity, when they gave her permission to leave them, because they refused to go with her, and they knew she could not go alone.

"At length, Francisco, the Yuma, arrived with the requisition from Col. Burke for her delivery. The packet was examined by the Indians but no one understood it. It was put into her hands to explain."

> Francisco, Yuma Indian, bearer of this goes to the Mohave nation to obtain a white woman there, named Olivia. It is desirable she should come to this post or send her reasons why she does not wish to come.
>
> Martin Burke, Lieut.-Col
> Commanding Headquarters,
> Fort Yuma, Cal.
> 27th January, 1856

"It was written in a bold, roundhand, the letters being a third of an inch long. It was the first work of English she had seen for five long, weary years, and she could not restrain her emotion. The cold chill of Indian reserve seemed to melt away, and she saw before her mind the old home scenes, and the happy voices seemed to welcome her

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return. She readily deciphered the meaning of that rescript, and communicated it to the assembled Indians. Accompanying it were six pounds of white beads, four blankets, and some other trinkets, to be given in exchange. These were accepted, and the Chief told her she was at liberty to depart for her friends. Many of the Indians, however, objected to her going, fearing they would be punished as her captors. The Chief s wife, the kind woman who saved her life in the famine, cried a day and a night as if she were losing her own child, and then gave her up. With the guide, she started for the Fort with a light head, on foot, as usual. She was ten days on the road, travelling with greater speed than ever before. This time the days were short to her, and so great was her mental excitement, that she knew neither weariness nor hunger. The trail was tortuous and rough, leading through mountains and gorges, and several times she was compelled to swim the Colorado. This time, too, her feet were protected from the sharp stones by sandals, such as are worn by the Indians.

"The Yumas and Mohaves are friends. Their manners, customs, and dress are the same, and their lodges are built upon the same plan. Their language, also, is similar—they easily understand each other. The two tribes last year made war upon the Cocupas, and took several prisoners. When they arrived at their villages the prisoners were killed, and the dead bodies suspended on a crucifix, while the whole tribe danced round the pole, singing and throwing arrows into the bodies

"She converses with propriety, but as one acting under strong constraint; and she has not forgotton the instructions of her childhood. She reads well, writes a fair hand, and sews admirable; though in her captivity she saw no implement nor instrument of civilization. She is very ambitious to learn, and spends most of her time in study."

A correspondent from the fort claimed that the main reason the Indians released Olive was because she had become too much of a burden to them after her sister had died, that "She was constantly weeping."

When Olive and Lorenzo's cousin, Harrison Oatman, arrived to take them to the Rogue River Valley, Jackson County, Oregon, it caused bitterness for the Thompsons. They had just settled Olive down to a quiet family life two months earlier, and they didn't want to let her go

Southern Oregon Historical Society #15368

Olive Oatman, 1859.

Mr. Thompson wrote to the *Star* about his concerns. He wanted to know where Harrison had been since 1853. And what had prevented him from hunting down and taking care of Lorenzo? What had caused this sudden tender sympathy?, Thompson asked.

Once in the Rogue Valley near Phoenix, Oregon, Olive stayed with Stephen Taylor and his wife, Abigail. The Taylors' daughter, Rachel, a teacher, continued to help Olive read and write

A granddaughter of Abigail Taylor wrote in her memoirs that Olive sometimes paced the floor for hours, weeping. "They could hear her all night. Just pacing the floor...."

Olive seemed ashamed of the tattoo marks etched deeply on her chin. She would cover them with her hand when she met anyone.

However, Olive was considered a heroine. Welborn Beeson, an early Jacksonville pioneer, wrote of Olive: "Olive Oatman the heroine was at church meeting. She had 5 streaks colloured [sic] on her chin by the Indians when she was a prisoner."

Olive's cousins, Harvey and Harrison Oatman, had arrived in the Rogue Valley in 1853. They filed adjoining donation land claims near Gasburg (Phoenix), Oregon.

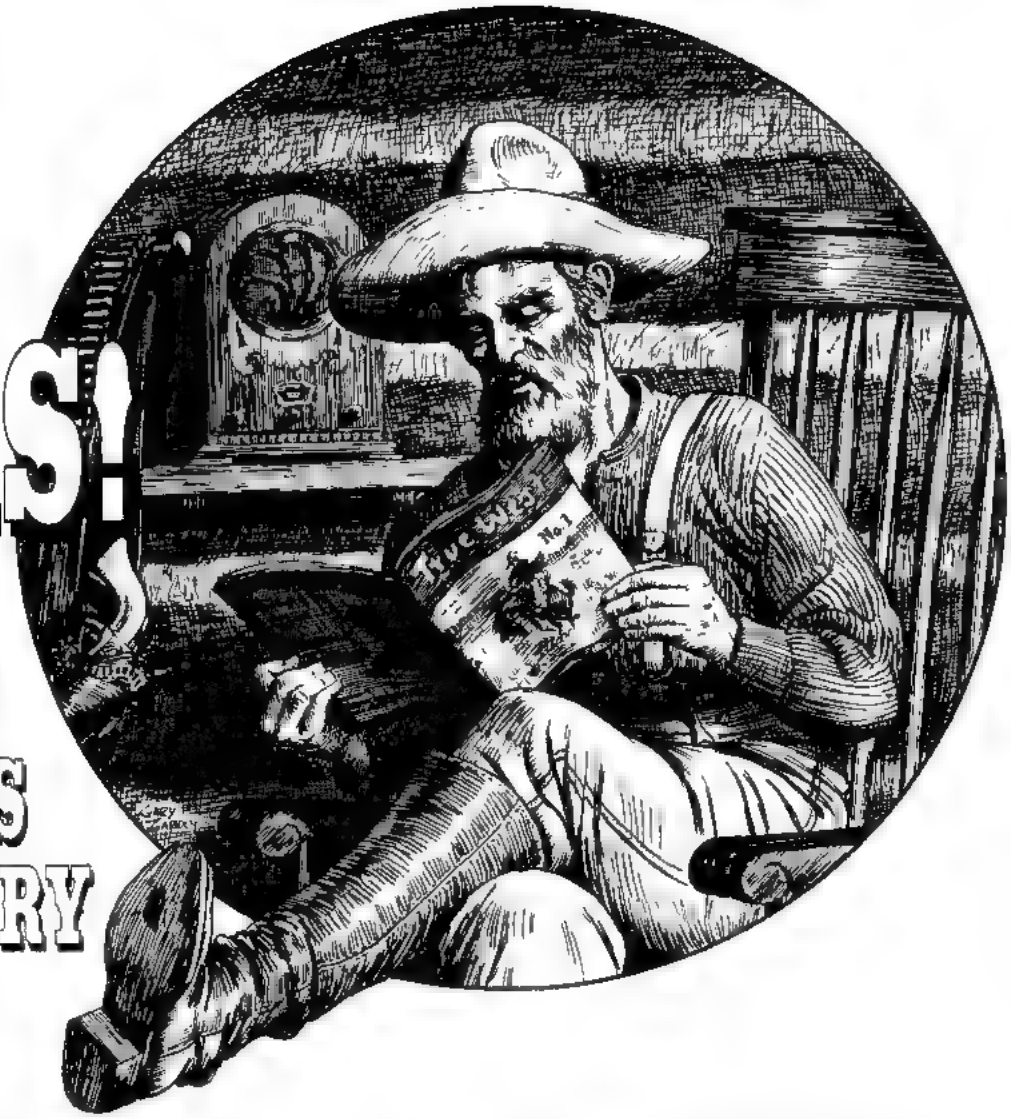
In June 1858, Olive and Lorenzo went to New York. R.B. Stratton wrote a book about Olive, and she toured for a year giving lectures. Lorenzo rejoined his family in Illinois near the original Oatman homeplace.

Olive married a wealthy man named John Brant Fairchild. They lived in Detroit, Michigan, for a few years, then moved to Sherman, Texas, where they made their home for over thirty years. Olive and John adopted a daughter, Mary Elizabeth, or "Mamie."

Olive was said to be shy about her blue tattoos, and when she went to town she always wore a dark veil. She was known as a kind woman and was active in the Episcopal Church. It was said that John Fairchild purchased many of Stratton's books about the captivity of the Oatman girls and burned them.

Four years before her husband's death, and five years before her daughter's, Olive Ann Oatman Fairchild died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-five. It was a Friday night, March 20, 1903. After an Episcopal Presbyterian funeral service at her home, Olive was buried in West Hill Cemetery, Sherman, Texas

45 YEARS!



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Harry Morse and the Horse Thieves

EDITED BY JOHN BOESSENECKER

Harry N. Morse was one of the great lawmen of the Old West. Sheriff of Alameda County, California, from 1864-1878, he achieved fame for breaking up the outlaw bands of central California. Among scores of hair-raising exploits, he killed the notorious bandidos Narato Ponce and Juan Soto and tracked down bandit chieftain Tiburcio Vasquez in one of the frontier's longest manhunts. Later, as the principal private detective on the Pacific Coast, he captured Black Bart, America's greatest stage robber, and played a leading role in many of the most important criminal cases of his day.

During the course of researching his biography, Lawman: The Life and Times of Harry Morse, 1835-1912 *(University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), I was fortunate to locate many of his memoirs. The following account of Sheriff Morse's capture of the outlaw Felipe Valencia has not appeared in print since it was published as a feature story in the San Francisco* Call *in 1882.*

Due to space restrictions it was not included in Lawman. *Now readers of* True West *can enjoy it here for the first time.*

Author's Collection

Harry Morse

It was in July 1874 that the events hereinafter described took place. A murder trial was in progress before Judge Samuel Bell McKee, of Alameda County. It was late in the afternoon and I was sitting beside the District Attorney, Mr. A.A. Moore, prompting him as to some questions to be asked a witness then upon the stand, testifying on behalf of the defense. The witness had gotten through with his testimony and stepped down off the witness stand when the defense stated to the court that that closed their side of the case. The District Attorney, however, said that he had a witness that he would like to introduce in rebuttal, and added that although the witness had been regularly subpoenaed, he had failed to put in an appearance. He asked the court that an attachment might issue and be placed in the hands of the sheriff for the arrest of the defaulting witness.

The motion was granted, the writ issued, and as I was the officer named, it was placed in my hands for immediate service. District Attorney Moore instructed me to be sure and have the defaulting witness in court at nine o'clock the next morning. This was no easy thing to do, as the defaulter lived thirty miles from the county seat. Looking at my watch, I found that I had only fifteen minutes to get ready and catch the San Jose afternoon train. To make the round trip and have the party in court on time in the morning would require some rapid traveling. But my orders were peremptory, and had to be obeyed.

Seizing my hat from the courtroom table, I started on the dead run for the train, reaching it just in time to get aboard. It was now 4:30

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PM, and as it was summer time I could reasonably expect about four hours more of daylight. This would give me ample time to find my witness and get back—on a freight train—to Oakland by midnight, and thus be on hand at the opening of the court in the morning.

A ride of twenty-two miles brought me to Niles Station, where I had to leave the train and make my way as best I could to where the defaulting witness lived. After a short search I was enabled to procure a horse and buggy. Wrapping myself up in the robes, I started off at a brisk pace for my destination, which was about eight miles distant. Driving on, I soon left the old Mission San Jose behind me and shortly reached the little side road that was to lead me to the house of the person whose attendance was required in court.

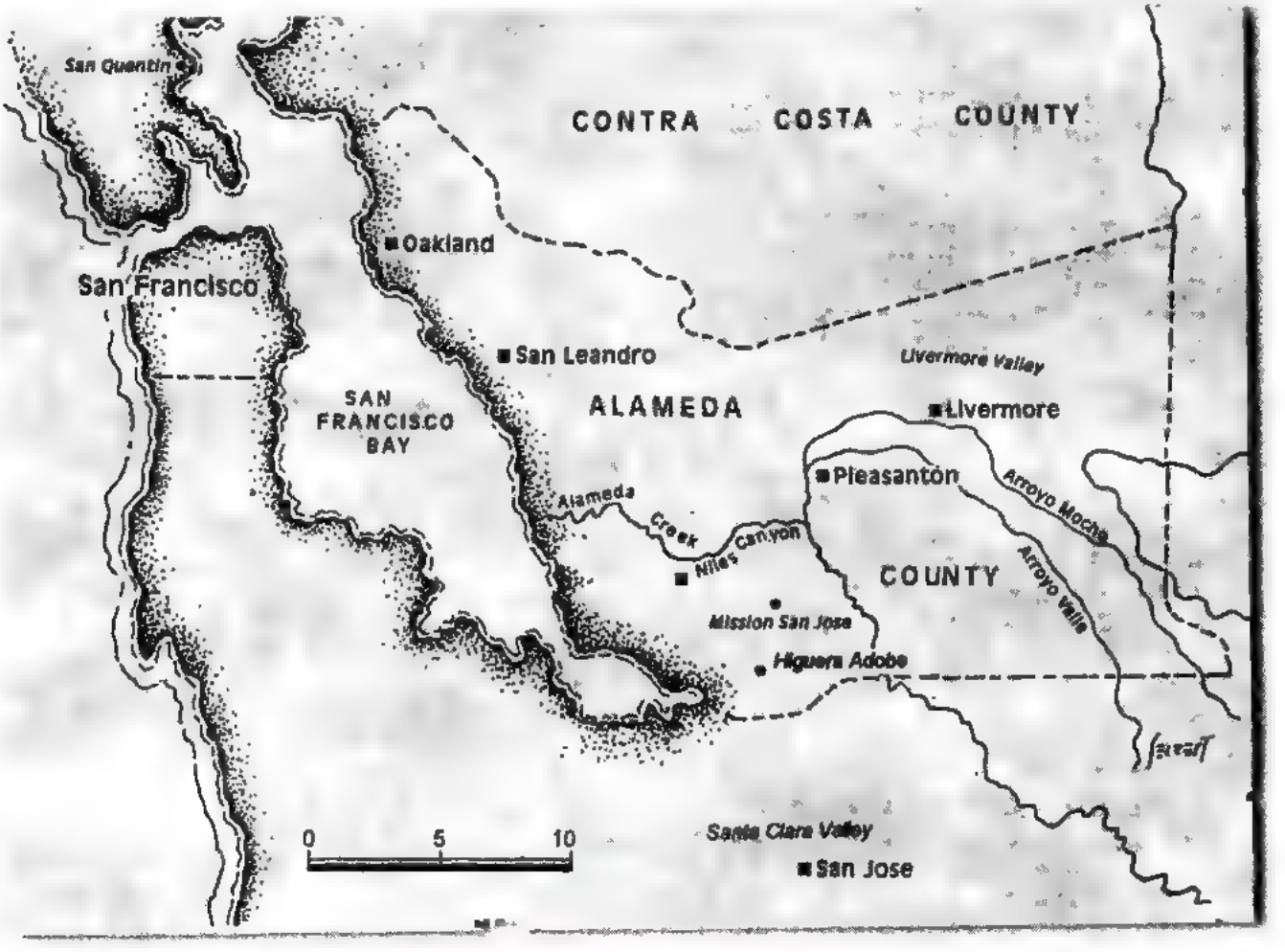
The house where he resided was about two miles south of the Agua Caliente Rancho and situated in a deep canyon near the foot of Mission Peak. Driving along the road as far as I could go with a horse and buggy, I got out and fastened the horse to the limb of a tree that grew in the creek. I then started up the canyon toward the house, on foot. The house stood hid in a thick clump of bushes and about half a mile up the canyon. The bushes were so dense that the house could not be seen until a person was within fifteen or twenty feet of it.

Trudging along up the steep canyon, parting the bushes as I went, I soon came in sight of the defaulter's domicile. Going to the front door, I knocked several times but received no answer. Hearing voices, apparently coming from behind the house, and concluding that the people were engaged in some kind of work there, I walked toward the rear of the place. As I came around to the back of the building, I saw several Mexicans sitting under a large live oak tree that grew near the bank of the ravine. Near to them, and close by the back door of the house, stood an old lumber wagon, on the upper or uphill side of which were two men who were just in the act of taking the saddles off their horses. The animals were reeking with foam and sweat. The men had their backs toward me and both were in their shirt sleeves.

"*Buenos tardes, senores,*" I said as soon as I saw them.

At the sound of my voice the two men who were attending to the horses turned quickly toward me and seemed somewhat startled and frightened at seeing me in their midst. As soon as I got a look at their faces, I recognized them as two of the worst Mexican desperadoes in the state, ready to commit almost any crime from horse stealing to stage robbery or murder, and one of whom—Felipe Valencia—I had been looking for for the previous six months and whom I had

Map by William B. Secrest



Author's Collection

Pleasanton, California, in the 1890s. During the 1870s it was known as the Alisal, which is Spanish for alder tree.

failed to meet until now.

Not having the least idea when I left home that I would run into such a hornet's nest as this, I came away without firearms or a weapon of defense of any kind, and was consequently at the mercy of these two ruffians. Of course, they were not aware of the fact that I was unarmed, so what was to be done must be done quickly. I looked sharply at the two men for a second and took in the situation at a glance. Any hesitancy on my part might have been fatal to me. I noticed that neither of the two men had pistols on them, and knowing full well that they never went unarmed, I commenced to look round for their weapons. I was not long in finding them. On the bed of the old wagon I saw the coats of the two men, one of which was spread out flat on the wagon bed, with the lapels of the coat nicely folded over each other. It occurred to me at once that their pistols were hid away under this coat.

"Think quick and act quick" is my motto, and which has pulled me through many an apparently bad fix. Springing toward the wagon, I seized the coat. Turning down the lapels, I found concealed therein two new eight-inch Colt's revolvers. I was master of the situation at once and the men were so surprised that they appeared dumbfounded and stood looking at me not knowing what to say or do, or knowing what my intention was. But it soon became apparent to them.

Seizing the pistols, I held one in each hand and covering the men with them, I said to the man I wanted, "Felipe, which one of these pistols is yours?"

Pointing to the one which I held in my left hand, he replied, "That one."

Turning the muzzle of the pistol which I held in my right hand toward the ground, I commenced cocking and shooting the loads out of it. As I completed the unloading of the pistol, I threw the empty weapon back upon the wagon. Turning toward Felipe, I said, "I want you, sir."

"What do you want me for?" he asked.

"For an assault with a deadly weapon," I replied.

"I guess you are mistaken in your man. I never assaulted any person," said Felipe.

"I am not very often mistaken, Felipe Valencia, and I am certain that I am not now. You shot at and beat nearly to death with your pistol a Mexican woman about six months ago, and I have a warrant for your arrest. "

"Where did all this beating that you tell about take place?" inquired Felipe.

"At the Alisal, in this county," I answered. [The Alisal is now called Pleasanton.]

"And you say you have a warrant

"THINK QUICK AND ACT QUICK" IS MY MOTTO, AND WHICH HAS PULLED ME THROUGH MANY AN APPARENTLY BAD FIX. SPRINGING TOWARD THE WAGON, I SEIZED THE COAT.

for my arrest for doing this?"

"Yes, I have the warrant."

"Let me see it," said Felipe.

"I don't happen to have it with me at present," I replied, "and therefore I cannot show it to you."

"Well then, I won't go with you."

Quick as a flash the cocked pistol was in his face.

"Hold up your hands, Felipe," I said, sternly. In an instant both hands of the desperado were held high up above his head. Ordering him to follow me, I led the way—my face toward him—to the front of the house, and calling the defaulting witness to me, I served the attachment upon him. Find the reason for his not appearing was the want of money to meet the necessary expenses of getting to the county seat, and upon his promising to be on hand by the early train in the morning, I gave him money enough to bring him down, and then left him.

Taking my prisoner down the canyon to my buggy, we got in and I drove back to the railroad station, arriving just in time to catch a freight train that was going to Oakland. It was now quite dark and the prisoner and I sat in the caboose car chatting pleasantly and smoking cigarettes. Finally Felipe said, "Now, see here, Sheriff, I don't want to go to the Alisal on this charge. No person knows that you have arrested me. I have forty dollars in my pocket. If you will let me go I will give you the money and my pistol, and no one will be any the wiser."

I could see from the way the man acted that it was not the charge of assault for which I had arrested him that troubled him the most. Something behind the present charge, that I at the time knew nothing about, was pressing upon his mind.

"Keep your money, Felipe. You have mistaken your man," I replied.

Seeing that I was angry, he relapsed into silence until we arrived at Oakland. It was midnight when we got to our destination, where I locked Felipe up in the county jail to await his examination.

On the following morning I telegraphed to Ralph Faville, my deputy at Alisal, to come down and take Felipe to that place for trial. The offense had been committed and the warrant issued by the justice of the peace of the township where Faville was stationed. Ralph arrived about noon and took the prisoner away on the evening train.

The next morning at eleven o'clock I received a letter from Contra Costa County, stating that eight head of valuable horses had been stolen from there by two Mexicans who had attempted to run them out of the county through the mountain ranges. On passing through a wheat field in the Livermore Valley, in the middle of the night, they had been intercepted by some of the rancheros who, seeing them in their wheat field so late at night, had their suspicions aroused that all was not right with them. Saddling up their horses, they rode after, and coming up to the Mexicans, brought them to bay. The Mexicans told a very plausible story, stating that they were on their way to the San Joaquin to drive in some cattle and that these were extra horses that they were taking along for some vaqueros who were already on the ranch where the cattle were being herded. In making their way through the mountains into the valley they had missed the road and so got lost and were now trying to find their way out of the field.

Author's Collection

Felipe Valencia was captured by Sheriff Harry Morse at the Higuera adobe in 1874. His real name was Felipe Soto.

The rancheros, believing their story, put them on the road and left them. The next morning at daylight, parties in pursuit had struck the trail of the thieves and, after hearing the story of the rancheros who met them in the wheat field, started on after the men and horses. The trail led them into what is known as El Arroyo del Valle, a deep canyon lying directly south of Livermore and between the mountain range on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley and the inner Coast Range on the east side of the Santa Clara Valley. The canyon of Arroyo del Valle is about sixty miles in length, with trails and bypaths leading out of it in all directions. The mountains are rugged and steep and afford an abundance of feed and water for any amount of stock, besides furnishing innumerable hiding places for the class of desperate men who make their living by preying on the property of others. No person not acquainted with the rough canyon would or could conceive how easy it is for thieves, knowing the trails and hiding places, to drive in horses and cattle and suddenly disappear as though the ground had opened and swallowed them up.

When the desperadoes got into this mountain range they imagined

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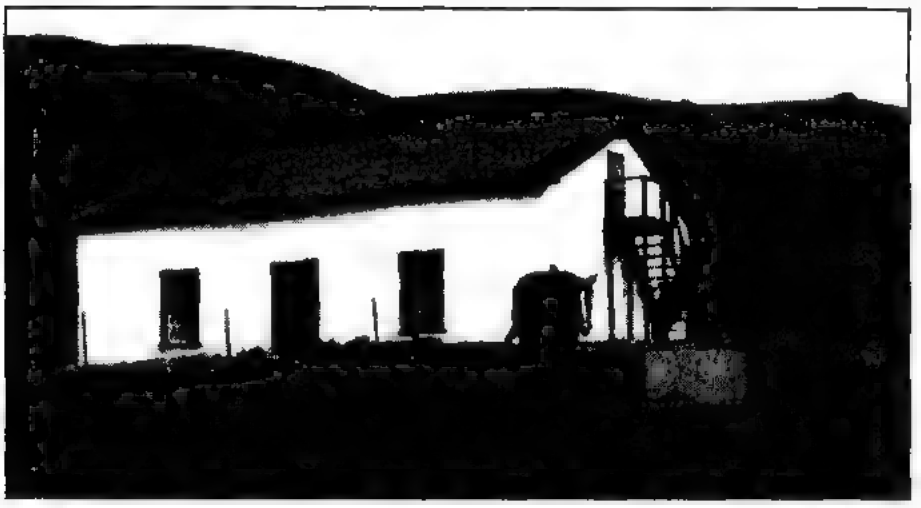


Author's Collection

The Higuera adobe, scene of Sheriff Morse's capture of Felipe Valencia, as it looks today in Fremont, California.

that they were safe from pursuit, but the trailers, having fresh tracks, followed them up vigorously and soon came in sight of the horse thieves. A running fight took place between the pursued and the pursuers for a short distance. The Mexicans, seeing that they were being followed too close for comfort, abandoned the stolen horses. Striking their spurs into the flanks of their mustangs, they fled away up one of the steep mountain trails and were soon lost to view. After securing the horses the pursuers abandoned the chase after the thieves and returned home.

The Mexicans, striking across the mountains toward San Jose, came down on the east slope of the inner Coast Range to the Agua Caliente Rancho, where I met them a few hours after. This accounted for Felipe's uneasiness and dread of going back to the Alisal. Had I known of the horse stealing at the time I could have captured both of the thieves just as well as one. From the descriptions of the Mexicans given me in the letter I was certain that they were the same two from whom I had captured the pistols at the house of the defaulting witness.

After reading the letter, I hastened to the telegraph office and wired to my deputy, Faville, to hold Felipe, as I had a charge of grand larceny against him. The answer came back stating that Felipe had been allowed to plead guilty to a simple assault and was fined forty dollars, which he had paid and then taken a hurried departure. A vigorous search was made for him but without success.

About three months later a man residing in Stanislaus County stated to me that a Mexican had stolen from the vicinity of where he lived a fine gray horse and that he believed that the animal had been brought into my county, near Livermore Valley. From the description of the Mexican I was satisfied that Felipe was the individual who had taken this horse. I wrote to my deputy, Ralph Faville, that I suspected Felipe was the thief, requesting him at the same time to keep a quiet watch for both the man and the horse. Faville soon found that Felipe had been skulking in the hills back of the Alisal and in possession of just such a horse as I had described to him as having been stolen from Stanislaus County. The whereabouts of the horse was soon ascertained but the Mexican was not so easily located, although Faville had been industriously at work seeking his hiding place.

One evening about a week after the horse had been located Faville happened to be sitting on the stoop in front of the hotel at Pleasanton, quietly enjoying his after-dinner smoke, when who should ride by, splendidly mounted, but Felipe Valencia. Faville sat still, apparently taking no notice of the desperado, and allowed him to ride on by. Any attempt to capture him while mounted would certainly result in failure. Faville kept his eyes on him, however, and noticed that he rode to the lower end of town, dismounted, tied his horse, and entered a Spanish dance house.

As soon as Felipe disappeared into the house Faville jumped to his feet and ran quickly to his own room in the hotel and procured his pistol. Striking out through the back streets, he soon came to the dance house. As Faville came around to the front of the house he found that Felipe had just remounted his horse and was in the act of riding away. Upon Faville's appearance, Felipe attempted to draw his pistol, but was too late. Faville sprang quickly forward, seizing the horse by the bridle, and at the same time thrust his pistol into the face of the desperado and ordered him to dismount. Felipe glared at him a moment, but seeing that Faville had the best of him, concluded that it would be useless to resist, and obeyed without further trouble. Faville then secured him and placed him under guard. Sheriff [John] Rodgers, of Stanislaus County, was telegraphed to and he came next day and took Felipe away to his own county where he was tried, convicted, and sent to the state prison for the term of nine years.

Felipe never forgave either Faville or myself for the part we took in his capture, and when being taken away to prison made use of some remarks that were more forcible than elegant and which were not at all complimentary to either one of us. Let us hope that his punishment will be the means of reforming him and show him that the way of the transgressor is hard indeed.

Harry Morse noted in his diary that Felipe Valencia's partner was Jesus Maria Perez; the sheriff was never able to capture him. The Higuera adobe, scene of Morse's capture of Valencia, has been restored and is now owned by the City of Fremont.

THE FRONTIER FUNERAL

By Jan Holden

The frontier funeral has not been chronicled much, despite the fact that most deaths occurred at home in full view of family and friends. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, undertaking, as a business was hardly evident. Though a coffin might be purchased from the local furniture dealer, the actual "laying out" of the deceased was left to family and friends. Quite often, the women washed and dressed their loved ones, while the men dug the grave

Death was so common on the frontier, that mourning took on a ritual importance rarely seen today. The entire community was often involved, as the 1888 journal of Mrs. A. Baldwin explains:

> In those days, every man within ten miles was a neighbor and every neighbor was a friend and when anyone died, a boy was sent on horseback from house to house to tell the sad tidings. On the day of the funeral, all the men and women in the country laid aside their work, however important, and attended it. Rough wagons, with boards across for seats, perhaps with a chair for some old grandmother, formed the procession, followed by men on horseback with their wives behind them.
>
> They had no hearse and the best wagon of the settlement held the coffin, and a homespun blanket answered for a pall....I have never seen anything that seemed to me so solemn as those wagons winding through the forests and over rough roads to the half-cleared graveyard of that new country.

Author's Collection

Two unidentified undertakers pose behind one of their finest caskets, circa 1885.

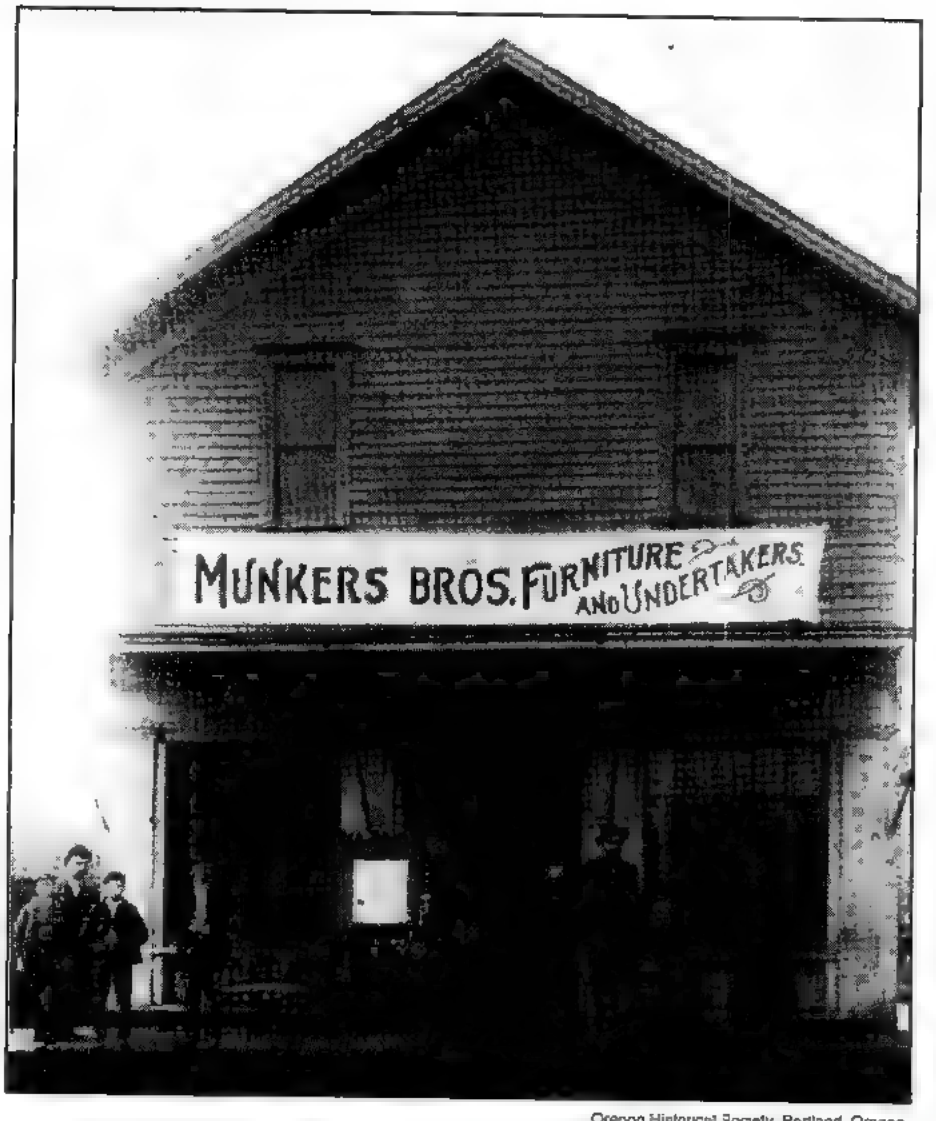
In the larger towns and cities, furniture salesmen and cabinet makers were beginning to see an opportunity for a sideline business in "undertaking." It was not unusual for furniture ads to list burial cases, coffins, or caskets alongside sofas, bureaus, and tables. (Around 1860 the term "casket" gained popular acceptance and coffin was gradually phased out of use.)

Since there was a regular clientele, and no particular schooling required at the time, the funeral business caught on quickly. In fact, one interesting example was a calling card which read:

Z. COTTON & SON
DENTISTS
UNDERTAKERS
PICTURE FRAMING
A SPECIALTY

During the mid-nineteenth century, four out of five undertakers listed themselves as "tradesmen undertakers." That is, they worked at other trades, yet were available to provide horse-drawn carriages, a hearse for transport of the body, black wreathes, and mourning ribbons for the household. Necessary man power was also available, to move furniture from one room to another so that the deceased could be placed on display. Services might have included placing the body in the casket, but any spiritual support or eulogizing was left strictly to the family or a local preacher.

Despite logistical problems, most rural survivors wanted to give their dead "a decent Christian funeral," if possible. To accomplish this often demanded that the body be kept in the house while friends traveled by wagon or horseback to the family farm or ranch. Since a funeral would lose much of its significance without a body, a good deal of ice was required to "keep" the dear departed "fresh." Though chemical embalming was already in practice in Europe, American methods of preserving the dead, well into the Civil War period, were based upon the simple rudiments of refrigeration.



Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon

The undertaking business provided a profitable sideline for many frontier cabinet and furniture makers. Portland, Oregon, based Munkers Brothers delivered coffins, but were not licensed to prepare bodies for burial.

Around 1860, the cooling board came into use. It was, as the name implies, a board to hold the body. The actual cooling part of the procedure came from a concave, metal ice-filled box which fit over the torso. The cooling board was received with great enthusiasm. It was portable, economical, and could be used after the body was fully dressed and groomed for viewing. The inventors, two Baltimore undertakers named Frederick & Trump, patented their invention, and it was used exclusively by undertakers until 1880, when undertaking became a "licensed" profession and embalming began to gain acceptance.

Dr. Thomas Holmes, of New York, had a keen interest in the preservation of dead bodies. In 1846 he resigned his position as assistant coroner in New York County to devote himself to intense experimentation using various chemicals. According to information from the National Funeral Directors Association, Dr. Holmes was particularly interested in a compound of zinc-chloride and arsenic.

Dr. Holmes claimed that this compound could "preserve bodies forever—or at least as long as a stone."

Dr. Holmes gained national recognition for his service in the Army Medical Corps during the Civil War. Holmes' duty consisted of embalming the bodies of officers killed in battle so that they could be shipped home for burial. Though there has been considerable disagreement concerning the number of embalmings the doctor performed, Thomas Holmes claimed it was more than 4,000. For the rest of his life, he referred to himself as "the Father of American embalming."

Certainly, the work of Doctor Holmes brought more attention to the science of embalming than ever before. This new interest gave a welcome boost to the burgeoning business of funerals and undertaking, helping to dispel some of the early fears that embalming was a form of mutilation. It also made Dr. Thomas Holmes a considerable fortune, as

he received $100 for every embalming performed.

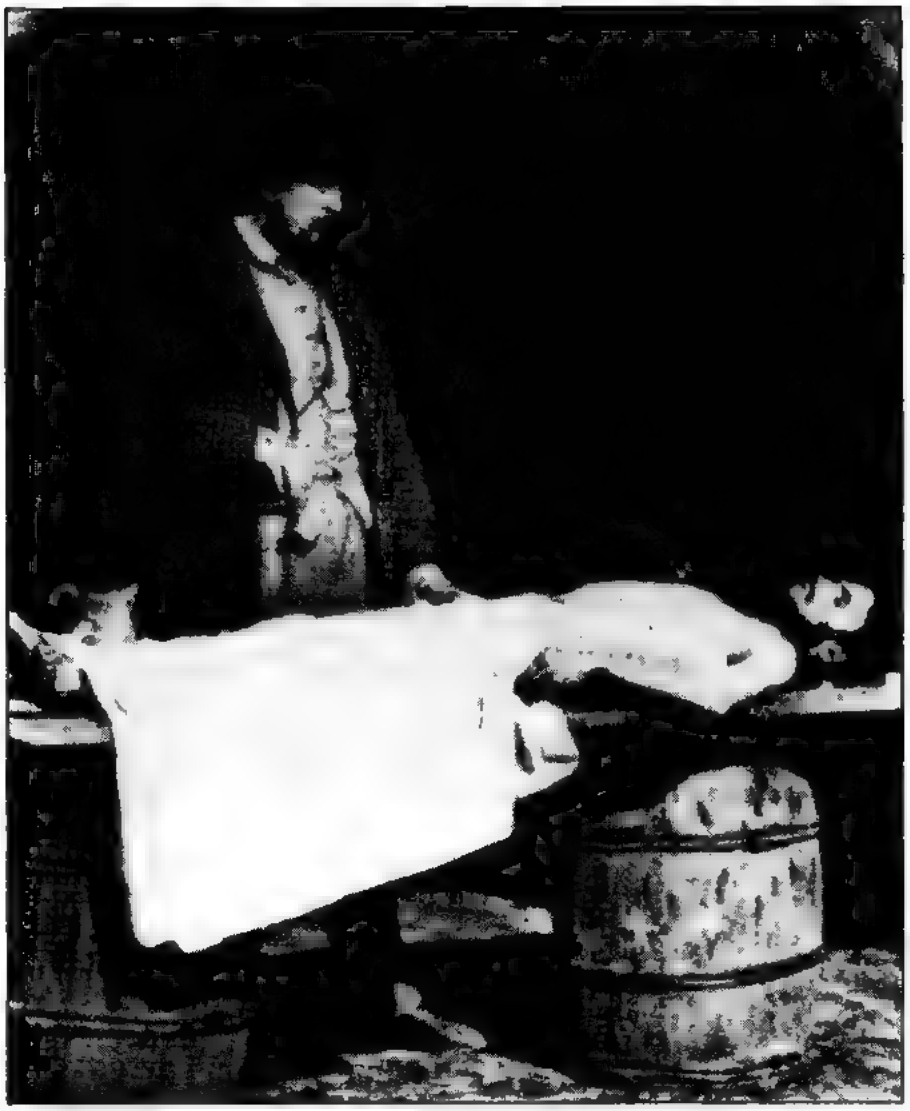
After the war, a vigorous advertising campaign was launched, declaring the numerous advantages of embalming over the use of refrigeration. By 1870 more than a dozen patents were granted for various types of embalming fluids. The Champion Chemical Company of Springfield, Ohio, became the first to make and sell embalming materials.

And what became of Dr. Thomas Holmes, the self-proclaimed "Father of American embalming?" His story ends on a bitter note. Holmes lost his fortune and turned to work as a druggist. His experimentation with fluids continued, though most of his peers remembered him best for inventing a recipe—not for an embalment, but for a wonderful tasting root beer.

Dr. Holmes didn't fancy being remembered for a soda and his disappointment grew to contempt for others who were making names for themselves in the new science of embalming. Perhaps he had the last laugh. He left strict instructions before his death, that his body should "NOT BE EMBALMED."

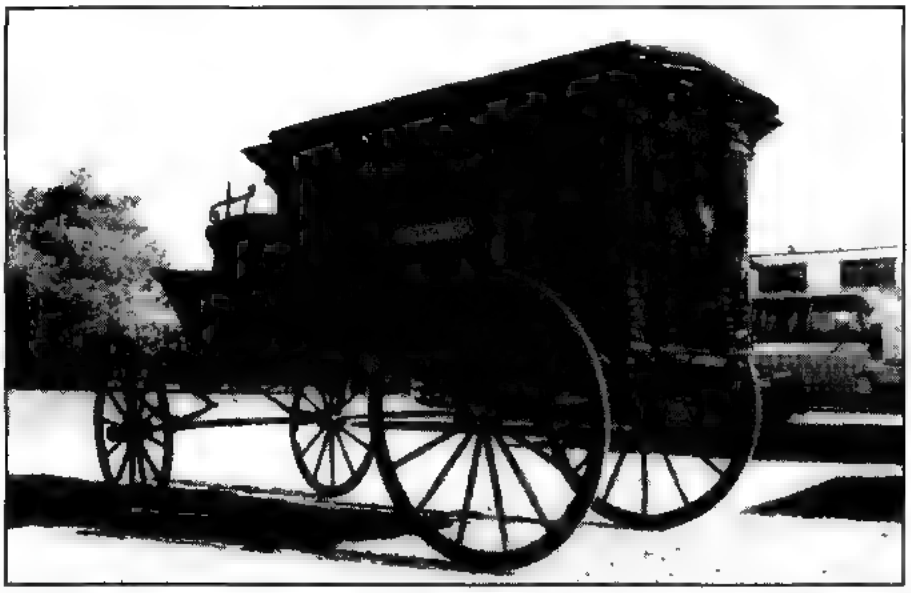
Inhabitants of the frontier affected some significant changes in undertaking. They worked as a community to manage loss and to comfort the bereaved. The fashion of looking at death with grim finality was replaced by a more hopeful attitude. The skull and crossbones symbolism gave way to angel wings, hands pointed heavenward, flaming candles, or the open Bible.

Robert Habenstein, in his book, *The History of American Funeral Directing*, points out the changing attitudes over and over again, but never so poignantly than in the words of remembrance at the 1889 funeral of an eight-year-old boy: "There is no death. What seems so is transition; this life of mortal breath is but the suburb of the life elysian, whose portal we call Death."



Author's Collection

A Civil War-era embalming surgeon treats the body of a Union soldier.



Author's Collection

This hearse, built in 1905 by Sayers & Scovill of Cincinnati, Ohio, is still used for services by a funeral home in Coquille, Oregon. The wooden doors on the rear of the hearse were sculpted to resemble draperies.

DÍA DE SAN JUAN

BY JO ANN HATCH

The cool morning air held a stir of excitement in San Juan, Arizona Territory, on June 24, 1882. Mexican villagers had arranged festivities to celebrate their annual San Juan Day. A matador from Mexico was to stage a bull fight, and music, dancing, games and special food, as well as religious services were scheduled. All was in readiness for a memorable time.

However, over 100 years later, the memories of that day are not the ones intended by those who arranged the celebration.

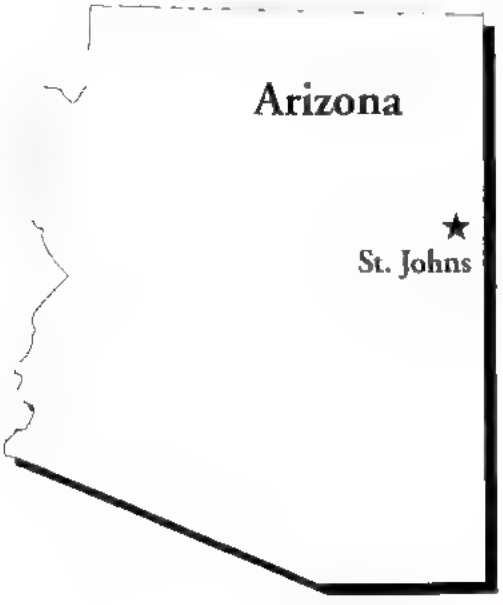
Located on the sandy banks of the Little Colorado River, San Juan was settled about 1874 when Solomon Barth, a Prussian born Jewish trader, led a group of his Mexican employees from Cubero, New Mexico, to the site. He held a contract to grow and haul grain to the United States Army at both Fort Wingate, New Mexico, and Fort Apache, Arizona.

By 1880 San Juan was a village of several hundred Mexicans and a few Americans, living in flat-roofed adobe houses. A post office was established and the town name was anglicized from San Juan to St. John, Arizona Territory. (The town would later be renamed St. Johns by the postal department.)

In this remote frontier town, an interethnic conflict began to take shape in 1878 as a religious group known as Mormons, who had settled along the lower Little Colorado, began to expand into the St. Johns area.

The unquestioned leader in St. Johns was five-foot three-inch Sol Barth, a man of boundless energy. In addition to founding the community, he also owned much of it. Another Anglo who anchored the fledgling community was John Lorenzo Hubbell, an Indian trader who had married into a prominent Mexican family and ran a trading post in St. Johns.

When the Mormons made known their desire to settle in the St. Johns area, many of the Mexican residents reacted with apprehension. Not one to miss an opportunity, however, Sol Barth sold them a large tract of land, some of which was already occupied by Mexican squatters, though Barth held legal claim to it.



Many of the Mexicans, not fully comprehending U.S. law, were angered when the Mormons began surveying land close to St. Johns for a town to be called Salem.

Mutual understanding among the cultures of those with Mexican, American, and European backgrounds was hard to come by. Barth and Hubbell took advantage of this rift to gain support against the growing number of Mormons. Strife resulted from economic and political competition, as well as the obvious religious differences.

In 1878, Mormon Thomas Lacy Greer and his wife, Catherine, came into Arizona from Texas. They brought their ten children, five wagons, several hundred head of cattle, and 200 horses. The Greers needed more room than the Mormon communities along the Little Colorado offered, so chose a valley eighteen miles northwest of St. Johns for their ranch.

Thomas Lacy Greer died in the summer of 1881, leaving the care of the huge ranch to his wife and four sons, Nathaniel, Gilbert, Richard, and Harris.

THE GREERS DID NOT live peaceably. Nat Greer said, "...on several occasions we had run-ins with other cattlemen and sheepmen who drove our cattle and horses out of our range and we, at times, dispersed various sheep camps in retaliation."

At the age of eighty, Nat Greer passed his memories to a young nephew. "During the winter of 1881-82 while riding the range...which was mostly open for 20-30 miles all around the ranch,...we kept missing some of our cows and horses, and we knew they were being stolen and driven to ranges out of our territory.

"Following our spring roundup and branding in 1882, we found that we were missing more than 50 head, mostly grown cows who would have calves by this time, and several fine mares and colts. We were very upset at the losses, as was our mother, Catherine Ellen, who was managing the ranch operation With eight children still at home she needed the ranch income. Mother also had five or six cowboys employed that she had to pay.

"...I caught a fellow leading one of our horses, heading out of our range at a fast gallop. I asked him in Spanish, 'Shall I shoot you, or shall I earmark you so that we can get this

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stealing stopped?' He chose the cutting of the earmark. We always, in the days of open range rights, considered stealing of cows and horses as a capital offense."

Though Nat Greer does not specifically say so in his recounting of the story, the ear marking incident no doubt triggered the deadly gunplay that took place when the Greer "outfit" visited St. Johns on the morning of June 24, to join the festivities of San Juan Day.

Nat said: "On the morning of June 24, 1882, we three Greer brothers went [to St. Johns] with five of our cowboys: Joe Woods, Hy Hatch, Frank Drew, James Vaughn and Jeff Tribit. We arrived [in town] about 10 that morning, stopped at our brother Gilbert's home to leave the horses, and went to see the acrobatic events in progress.

"We were told to turn in our guns when we arrived there... which we refused to do, as many of the men there had their guns. We left the acrobatic area and went to Will Platt's store to get something to eat before going to the bull fight. I stepped near the front window in the store, and looking out on the main street, saw some 15 or 20 men coming our way, all with six guns and rifles. I told the others we had better move fast, split up and work our way out of town.

Author's Collection

Harris Greer, left, and Hy Hatch were both wounded in the 1882 San Juan gunfight.

"Joe Woods, Frank Drew, Hy Hatch and Jeff Tribit went out the back door of the store, and headed for Gilbert's place to get our horses. Harris, Richard and I, along with James Vaughn headed out the front door....we were trying to get to a [nearby] vacant house and from there to our horses.

"We were nearly to the house when the shooting started. Most of the oncoming men were in front of the Barth Hotel about 100 yards away. We shot back and part of them went inside the hotel and immediately started to shoot from the upper story windows. The four of us in the house had only our six guns, plenty of bullets in our belts, but our shooting wasn't too effective at that distance.

"...James Vaughn was hit by a rifle shot from the hotel window. Harris [Greer] received a bullet in his hand. We wrapped it up in my neckerchief and he was able to keep shooting, but we were not able to help James. He died in a few minutes. We decided to stay away from the windows and save our bullets, and wait to see what our enemies' actions might be.

"It seemed to me that we had been exchanging gunfire about 15 or 20 minutes when we saw [a friend] Nathan Tenney coming up the street from the west with a white flag. Mr. Tenney got the firing stopped from the hotel. He came into the house and said we had better give up, or we would surely all be killed with the big odds against us. He told us Hy Hatch had been shot in the shoulder before the other four got out of town, and that only one of our enemies had been hit and he was only wounded.

"I asked Tenney to go get the sheriff, E.S. Stover, which Mr. Tenney did. Sheriff Stover said he would lead us out to safety. Mr. Tenney [led the way out] of the house, but was immediately shot from the hotel area. He went to the ground and we could see that he appeared to die at once.

"Sheriff Stover, on seeing Mr. Tenney killed, gave me back my pistol and ran from the house. Soon after the sheriff had gone, his deputies, Tom Perez and Alejandro Peralta, came to us and told us to give up, which we agreed to do. Knowing the men [in the hotel] wanted me the most, I told

Harris to go out and then Richard. I asked the two deputies to shield me from the back and we all went down the street.

"The next morning after we were put in jail, Lorenzo Hubbell sent word to me that if I would give him $6,000 he would [see that we were] turned out. I refused his demand. I had $125 in my pocket when they arrested us. Dick and Harris had smaller amounts on them. The money and our guns were never returned to us."

The death of Nathan Tenney, who had been on friendly terms with all of the different factions in town, seemed to have a sobering effect, and there were no further hostile actions. After several days the Greers and their cowboys were released on bond, $1,000 each for the Greers and $500 each for Woods, Hatch, Drew, and Tribit. All members of the Greer faction were charged with "assault with intent to commit murder."

A grand jury was assembled on July 5, and according to the original trial records, the three Greer brothers and all of their surviving cowboys were indicted. They were charged with "unlawfully, feloniously and willfully assaulting one Jose Giron with a deadly weapon, to wit, a gun loaded with powder and ball with intent and attempt of malice aforethought to unlawfully kill and murder Jose Giron. [He may have been the one Nat Greer mentions as having been wounded by the Greers' gunfire.]

"Names of witnesses examined before the said Grand Jury on finding the foregoing indictment [were] Sol Barth, Joseph Hinsley, Louis Chavis, Lorenzo Hubbal, Andrew Gibbons, Gilbert Greer, James Ritchey, Willard Farr, Roman Lopez, W.N. Greer, B. Jolly, Jose Garcia, Charles Pattin, Antonio Gonzales, Thomas Perez, Ottonio Baca, Daniel DuBois, E.S. Stover, Don Babbitt, Jose Giron." Sol Barth was foreman of the grand jury and William Rudd signed the papers as district attorney.

No record of charges against any person for the killing of Nathan Tenney and James Vaughn, or the wounding of Harris Greer and Hy Hatch, are apparent in the Apache County files.

Included in the original trial records is an interesting document. For some reason a statement was taken from one H.A. Martineau concerning the proceedings of the grand jury: "H.A. Martineau, being duly sworn says that the late Grand Jury in and for the county of Apache, which was duly impaneled by the District Court of Apache County on the 5th day of July, 1882...held their sessions in an adobe building some distance from the court house in St. John.

"That the sessions of said Grand Jury were not in the least secret, and kept concealed from the public. That during the sessions thereof, the doors and windows of the jury room were kept open and the hallway near the door of said room, while open were thronged with persons lounging about the door and also the window was opened and persons were around it, and near to it, so that anyone could hear what was transpiring in said Jury room.

"[Mr. Martineau] had cause to go there to be a witness before said body, and while waiting in expectation to be called as a witness he distinctly heard what was going on in said room, although he sat much further off than many others. He heard a portion of the testimony given by Mr. Sol Barth, wherein he stated that the Greer boys, who are indicted, fired several shots before the Mexicans had fired any, also that...the Greer boys had bought all the cartridges in his store. [Mr. Martineau] also heard Mr. S. Barth interpret the testimony of a witness, who also stated, as interpreted by Mr. Barth, that the Greer boys had fired first on the Mexicans....It seemed to be public for everybody to hear who desired it."

This testimony was given on July 10, 1882, five days after the grand jury indicted the Greers and their cowboys.

Sobered by the death and violence of this day, a fragile peace descended, and though there were no more killings between the Greers and their neighbors, it was many years before St. Johns could be called a peaceable town.

On July 10, 1883, just one year after the shoot-out, a verdict was handed down in the case of *Territory of Arizona v. Nathan Greer, et al:* "We the jury in the above entitled case find the defendants Not Guilty."

Author's Collection

James Vaughn, a Texan, was murdered by a Mexican mob in San Juan on June 24, 1882. This headstone was placed over his grave by the Greer family

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True West Legends

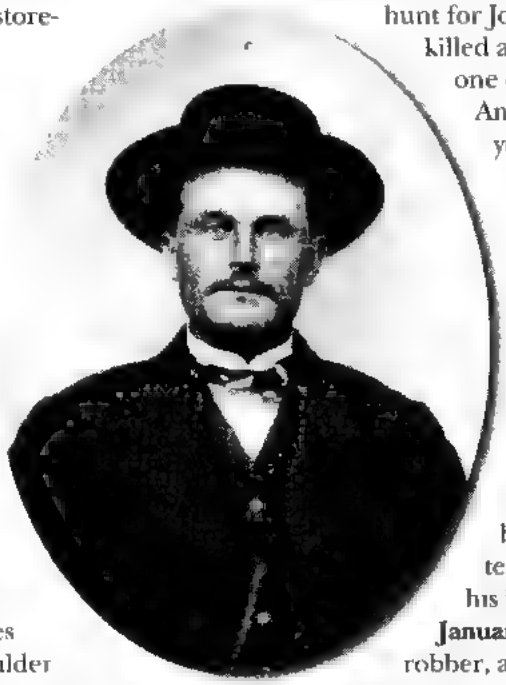
HARRY MORSE

February 2, 1835—Henry Nicholson Morse is born in New York City to Abraham Washington Morse and Charlotte Speight Morse. At the age of ten he goes to sea, not as a cabin boy but as a common sailor, on the New York–Liverpool route.

February 4, 1849—Fourteen-year-old Harry Morse joins the Gold Rush as a crewman on the *Panama*, bound from New York to San Francisco.

August 8, 1849—After an arduous, six-month voyage around Cape Horn, the *Panama* sails through the Golden Gate. Young Morse spends the next decade drifting restlessly from one job to another: miner, butcher, expressman, and storekeeper.

Spring 1854—While Morse is on a horseback ride from Alameda to Oakland, he is pursued by the notorious robber Felipe Carabajal. Morse manages to outrun him and escape. This is his first encounter with a Hispanic bandido.



August 31, 1861—At the outbreak of the Civil War, Harry Morse joins a militia unit, the Oakland Guard. Within a few years he is promoted to captain and is appointed deputy provost marshal of Alameda County. He is a leader in battling secessionist sentiment during the war years. In later years his enemies would accuse him of being a "shoulder striker," or political bully, for allegedly roughing up local southern sympathizers.

September 2, 1863—Harry Morse is elected sheriff of Alameda County, taking office on March 7, 1864. The county's Livermore Valley is infested with dangerous bands of stock thieves and robbers, and the young sheriff embarks on a campaign to eliminate them.

September 19, 1866—Sheriff Morse sets off after Narciso Bojorques, a noted bandit, and encounters him at George Foscalina's store near Sunol. Bojorques draws his pistol from horseback and Morse opens fire, wounding the bandit in the arm. Bojorques escapes but is slain in a shooting fray in Copperopolis several months later.

November 1, 1867—Morse gets a tip that the fugitive murderer Narato Ponce will ride into the Livermore Valley that night. With two other officers he lies in ambush. Ponce rides into the trap and Morse orders him to surrender. The outlaw jerks his pistol and opens fire. Swinging up his shotgun, Morse blows him out of the saddle with a load of buckshot. Badly wounded, Ponce manages to escape on foot into the darkness.

December 15, 1867—Morse learns that Ponce is recovering from his wounds in an adobe near Pinole in Contra Costa County. When the sheriff's little posse approaches, Ponce tries to flee. Morse orders him to stop, and the outlaw throws down his serape and takes dead aim at the sheriff with his pistol. Sheriff Morse kills Ponce with a single rifle shot.

October 14, 1868—Morse and a deputy, Lew Morehouse, embark on a twelve hundred mile manhunt for Joe Newell, a young desperado who killed an old man in a quarrel. After forty-one days they capture Newell in Los Angeles County. He is sentenced to five years in San Quentin.

May 26, 1870—Eight months earlier five helpless men are tied up and shot to death during the robbery of a remote store in San Joaquin County. Although the crime occurred far from his jurisdiction, Sheriff Morse determines to capture the bandit leader, Jesus Tejada. He and Lew Morehouse make two manhunts into the Coast Range before they capture Tejada at his mountain hideout. Tejada is sentenced to hang, but dies of syphilis in his jail cell.

January 10, 1871—Juan Soto, a notorious robber, and two unidentified bandits, hold up the Thomas Scott store near Sunol. They shoot and kill the clerk, Otto Ludovisi, and escape on horseback. Harry Morse makes a long search for the killers but cannot find them.

May 10, 1871—Harry Morse and Santa Clara County Sheriff Nick Harris lead a nine-man posse to the Saucelito Valley in the Coast Range a dozen miles south of Pacheco Pass. Morse locates Juan Soto in a lonely adobe. In one of the most spectacular gun battles of the Old West, Morse single-handedly outguns Soto during a close quarters pistol duel. When the bandit's revolver is disabled by one of Morse's bullets, Soto ducks into the adobe house, seizes three freshly loaded pistols, and runs for his horse. At a range of 150 yards, Morse aims his Winchester Model 1866 carbine and drills Soto through the right shoulder. Now Soto turns and rushes headlong at Morse and Sheriff Harris in a desperate, last ditch effort to kill his pursuers. Ignoring Morse's command to surrender, Soto closes to 100 yards, a revolver in each hand and

By John Boessenecker

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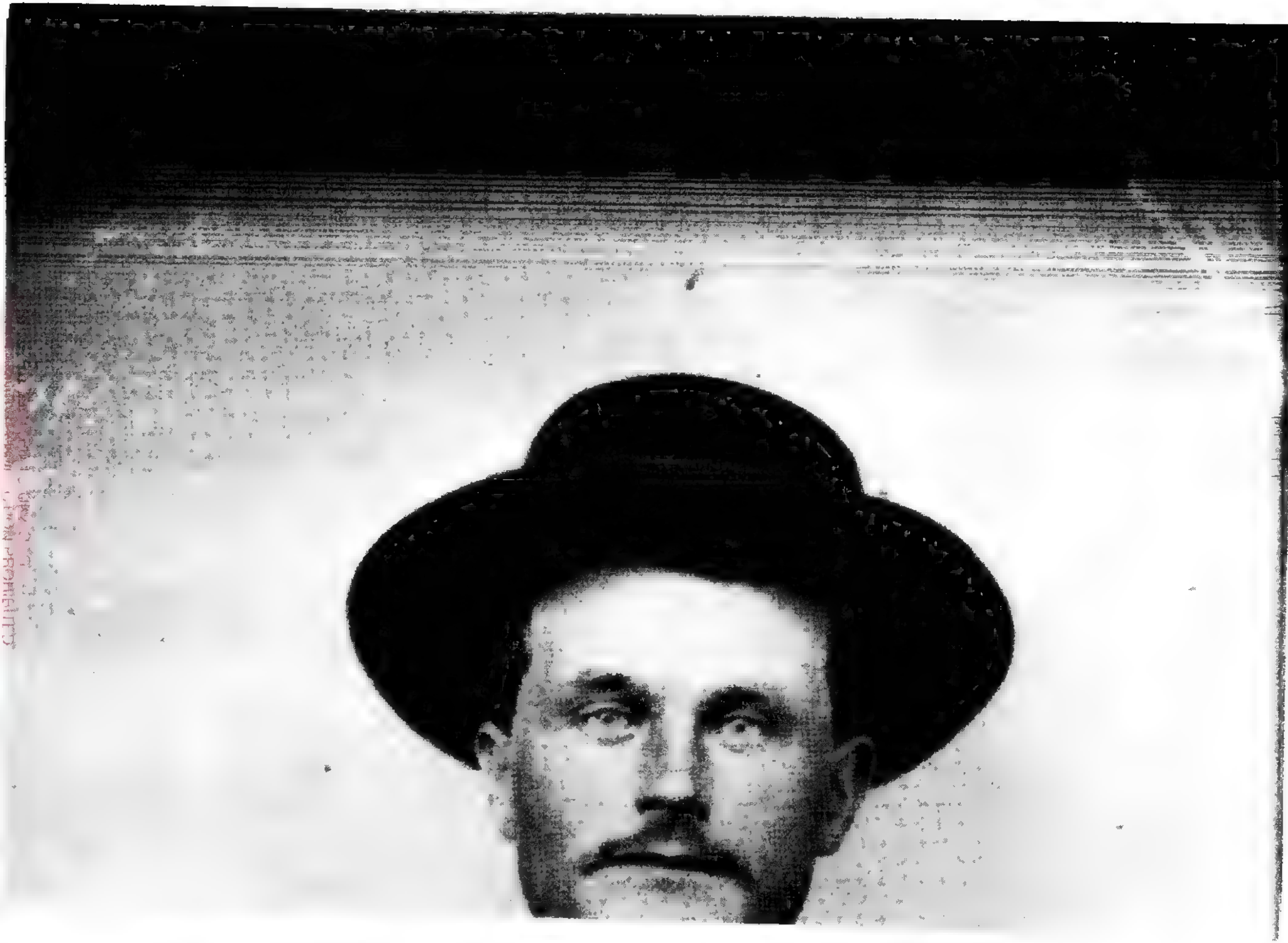

True West Legends
Harry Morse

another in his belt. Morse fires a single shot which tears off the top of the outlaw's head.

February 10, 1872—Sheriff Morse, Lew Morehouse, and two police detectives locate bandit chieftain Procopio Bustamante, nephew of the notorious Joaquin Murrieta, in a brothel on Morton Street in San Francisco. As the other officers enter the front door, Morse slips in the rear. The outlaw tries to draw a pistol, but Morse seizes him by the throat, rams a gun muzzle into his ear, and says simply, "Procopio, you're my man."

June 1872—Dime novelist Ned Buntline (E.Z.C. Judson) hears of Morse's exploits and writes a fictional story about Morse and Procopio which he calls "Red Dick, the Tiger of California."

March-May 1874—Sheriff Morse is appointed by Governor Newton Booth as head of a special state-funded posse to track down Tiburcio Vasquez, California's most wanted outlaw. For several years Vasquez and his gang have terrorized central California and the San Joaquin Valley with well planned bandit raids. Morse and his posse track Vasquez for two months and 2,700 miles in one of the frontier's longest sustained manhunts. Morse finally learns that Vasquez is hiding out at the adobe of Greek George in the Hollywood Hills near Los Angeles. But Billy Rowland, sheriff of Los Angeles County, tricks Morse into believing that his information is wrong. Rowland waits for Morse and his men to ride north, then moves in, captures Vasquez, and collects the $8,000 reward.

March 3, 1878—Harry Morse retires as sheriff after fourteen years in office. He opens the Morse Detective Agency in San Francisco.

March-April 1879—Morse cracks the Dupont Street Frauds case, implicating major financial and political figures, including San Franciso Mayor Andrew J. Bryant, in corruption.

September 1882-September 1883—Harry Morse investigates the Harkins Opium Ring, involving bribery, political corruption, and opium smuggling in the port of San Francisco. As a result, seventeen corrupt government officials are removed from their jobs and a federal magistrate, Edward O'Beirne, is convicted of accepting a bribe and is removed from the bench.

November 12, 1883—Months earlier Harry Morse had been retained by Wells, Fargo & Co. to arrest, if possible, the stage robber Black Bart, who held up twenty-nine stagecoaches between 1875 and 1883. When the robber drops a handkerchief at the scene of a holdup, Morse traces it to a laundry in San Francisco. He quietly arrests Black Bart on Bush Street near Montgomery. The robber turns out to be Charles E. Boles, a mining man and Civil War veteran. Boles confesses and is sentenced to San Quentin.

July-November 1895—Harry Morse acts as detective for the defense of Theo Durrant in the "Crime of the Century." Durrant is charged with the sex murders of two young women in San Francisco. Durrant is convicted and hanged.

August 6, 1901—Morse investigates the $283,000 "Selby Smelter Robbery" in Contra Costa County. It is the largest theft of gold bullion of that era. John Winters, a former employee, is arrested and sentenced to San Quentin.

March 1905—The old detective handles his last big case, the mysterious death of philanthropist Jane Stanford, widow of Senator Leland Stanford and founder of Stanford University. Whether Mrs. Stanford died of poisoning or a heart attack will remain an enduring mystery.

January 11, 1912—Harry Morse dies peacefully in his Oakland home at the age of seventy-six.

WHAT TO READ:

Lawman: The Life and Times of Harry Morse, 1835-1912, by John Boessenecker. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.

Dangerous Trails: Five Desperadoes of the Old West Coast, by William B. Secrest. Barbed Wire Press, 1995.

Graphic Description of Pacific Coast Outlaws, by Charles Edward Shinn, edited by J.E. Reynolds. Westernlore Press, 1958, 1990.

WHERE TO GO:

Oakland California. Two of Harry Morse's pistols, his saddle, and other memorabilia can be viewed at the Oakland Museum.

Fremont, California. The Higuera adobe, scene of Morse's capture of Felipe Valencia, is owned by the city of Fremont and is in the hills at the south end of town.

Saucelito Valley, California. The Pfeiffer adobe, scene of Morse's gunfight with Juan Soto, is still standing but can only be reached by a long trip on rough jeep trials through locked gates. It can be visited only with permission of the owner.

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GUNSHOT!

By Sylvia Wittels, MD

Illustrated by Adam Wallenta

In the Old West, the gun was always within arms reach. Of course that made gunshot wounds an occupational risk, so common that any self-reliant citizen needed to know how to deal with them. The methods may have been crude, but the results could be effective.

Kit Carson, in his autobiography, recalled a 1826 mishap that resulted in a gunshot wound and described the treatment that followed:

> On the road, one of the party, Andrew Broadus, met with a serious accident. He was taking his rifle out of a wagon for the purpose of shooting a wolf, and, in drawing it out, accidentally discharged it, receiving the contents in the right arm. We had no medical man with us, and he suffered greatly from the effects of the wound. His arm began to mortify and we all were aware that amputation was necessary. One of the party stated that he could do it. Broadus was prepared for any experiment that was considered of service to him. The "doctor" set to work and cut the flesh with a razor and sawed the bone with an old saw. The arteries being cut, to stop the bleeding, he heated a kingbolt from one of the wagons and burned the affected parts, and then applied a plaster of tar taken off the wheel of a wagon. The patient became perfectly well before our arrival in New Mexico.

Kit Carson was famously laconic as he remembered the experiences of his youth. However, his sparsely worded recollection of this event can serve as focus for four centuries of shifting medical and surgical opinion on the nature and the treatment of gunshot wounds.

Ever since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, medical observers had noticed that gunshot wounds were different from arrow wounds. They were red and hot and, not infrequently, exuded pus.

Victims of arrow wounds either died instantly or made a slow recovery. In contrast with bullets, arrows were of low velocity and if they did not pierce a vital organ or vessel, recovery was possible. Those that suffered a slow spiral to death were assumed to have been a victim of poison on the arrow tip. So when victims of gunshots died a lingering death, the "obvious" conclusion was that the bullet also carried some poison.

For centuries, surgeons on both sides of the Atlantic had argued for and against the removal of the bullet because of this obsession with poison. A German surgeon advised in 1487 that poison be removed with the following technique: "Take a seton [a thread or cord], push it through the wound and pull back and forth to force the powder out...You may then insert a lint plub [sic] moistened with bacon or lubricated with ox grease. Whether the wound be caused by gunshot powder or barged arrow, the plub [sic] will draw the poison to itself, so that none remains in the cavity to make it suppurate. Next, heal the wound with a good greased patch, or use equal parts of oil of rose and turpentine with a fifth part of powdered camphor. Mix together, warm a little and apply to a plug of lint or a bandage. In this way, the poison can be drawn out. If you are in the field...use goat or cow milk." The copious pus that resulted from this procedure was met with enthusiasm and labeled as "laudable pus."

We now know bullets do not cause acute poisoning. Rarely, however, there can be chronic lead poi-

soning caused by a bullet being retained for years. Anemia, abdominal pain, kidney disease, brain or nerve problems, and elevated blood lead levels may suggest the diagnosis, but it is rare, with only thirteen cases reported worldwide by 1982. Infection, alcoholism, and the bullet lodging near a joint space increase the risk of actual lead poisoning.

Eventually, the theory of ballistics replaced the idea of a "poison." In 1894 Sir Victor Horseley demonstrated the consequences of the passage of a bullet by firing into blocks of soap and clay. His measurements of the diameter of the projectile tract, in relationship to the velocity of the bullet, predicted what scientists have subsequently confirmed: that high velocity missile wounds devitalize tissue for a distance beyond the actual missile tract. The wounding capacity of a bullet is proportionate to its mass and speed.

Bullets produce tissue damage in three different ways. First, they destroy tissue by laceration and crushing. Second, they cause both permanent cavitation (in the path of the bullet itself) and temporary cavitation (in the wake of the bullet). In 1897, Sir Thomas Longmore described experiments in which he fired bullets through open and closed lead cans filled with water. He demonstrated that the greatest effect occurred a specific time after the bullet had passed through the can. Also he noted the greatest effect in the wake of the bullet. This is the effect of cavitation. Third, at high velocity, shock waves can compress the air or tissue and travel ahead of the bullet. This effect sometimes can be enough to break bones or disrupt blood vessels.

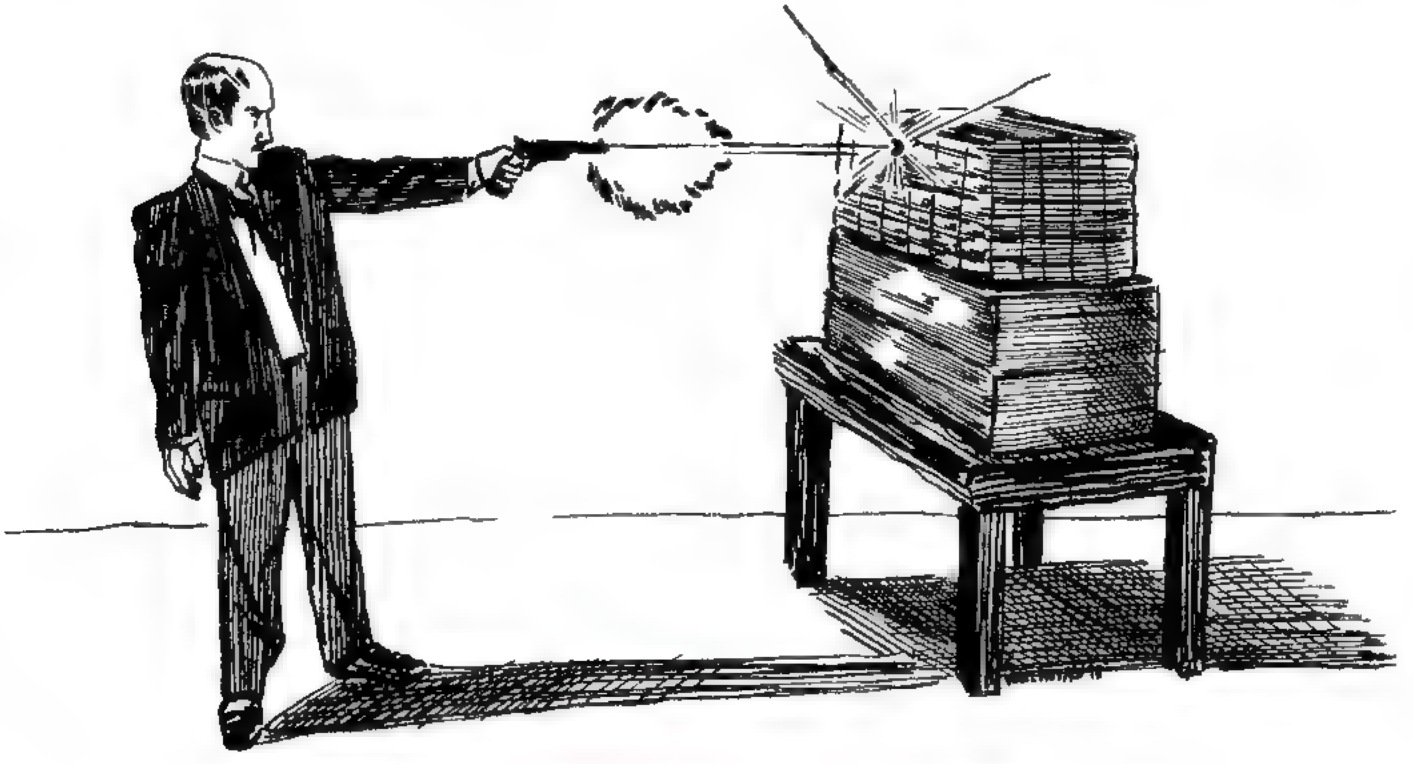
At the United States Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, scientists refined the target model, using a bone segment encased in gelatin. Firing handguns and rifles, modern and antique, their studies confirm what the long-suffering character in Kit Carson's tale knew viscerally. Rifling spins the bullet and increases the kinetic injury, increasing the destructive force. It is understandable that Broadus "suffered greatly" from the effects of the wound

Surgeons had debated the merits of enlarging a gunshot wound and looking for the bullet ever since the founding of the nation. During the American Revolutionary War, British army surgeons believed in enlarging a "contaminated" wound. However, John Hunter, the father of "modern" surgery disagreed, advising surgery only if there were hemorrhage and the need to tie off a spurting artery; bony fragments requiring removal; a dangerous foreign body; an eviscerated organ that needed to be pushed back in; or pressure on a vital organ.

Despite Hunter's opinion, however, three decades after Kit Carson's adventure, Civil War military surgeons were still trying to immediately extract the bullet. There were ingenious instruments called "stork bills" and "raven bills," "hooks," and "seekers." There were "borers" to be screwed into the projectile and a "twister" with curved teeth on its forceps to pluck it out.

Later, this obsession with finding the bullet might have cost President

Eventually, the theory of ballistics replaced the idea of a "poison." In 1894 Sir Victor Horseley demonstrated the consequences of the passage of a bullet by firing into blocks of soap and clay.



James A. Garfield his life Johann Friedrich August Von Esmarch had served in three Prussian military campaigns and felt that he knew the facts when he roundly condemned Garfield's medical care. "If they had entirely omitted the search after the bullet and immediately after the injury dressed the wound in a real antiseptic way, the President might still be alive like our emperor." (Wilhelm I had survived two assassination attempts.) He continued, "It is true that the public still thinks the bullet most dangerous: the soldier is happy when you put into his hand the bullet which you have cut out. But the surgeon should know that the bullet itself does not do any damage in most of the cases; the damage which proceeds from it is caused by its course; the damage which is added to it mostly proceeds from the examiners' fingers."

However, we can only guess as to whether Kit Carson and his companions were at all troubled by this issue. With "no medical man," the decision not to look for the bullet may not have been thought out. Or the bullet, fired at such close range, may have already exited the wound. And whether they knew it or not, the wilderness group, in opting for expectant management until "mortification" set in, was following the Hunter approach.

As Kit Carson explains, the mortifying flesh made amputation imperative. Obviously, in this case, days had passed since the accidental injury. The term "mortifying," was then used quite literally to describe the death of tissue. What Kit Carson was describing was actually necrosis or gangrene.

We know now that with a bullet's extensive disruption of blood supply, tissue necrosis occurs, providing an ideal medium for bacterial growth. Bone fragments only help it along. The bacteria are those inevitably carried with the ball, and on portions of the skin and clothing of the victim. It is more complicated than the bullet merely pushing along the infectious material. There is a negative pressure within the temporary cavity that sucks in foreign material and skin fragments with microorganisms.

From Carson's brief description of mortifying flesh, it is clear that gangrene was setting in and there was only one choice. (The term "gangrene" is commonly used in surgical practice to imply the loss of blood supply, and subsequent attack by bacteria. It is a necrosis, or pattern of cell death and can be "wet" if liquefaction predominates, and "dry" if coagulative necrosis predominates.) In this pre-antibiotic era, the only way to prevent overwhelming sepsis was to amputate and to remove the infected limb before the infection spread.

And in this simple decision, these wilderness surgeons would have had no argument with the academicians of Europe—and, quite probably with any "medical man."

Of course at that time, being a "medical man" might not mean much. Little medical education was formal and many simply hung out a shingle and assumed the title of Doctor. Even fifty years later, a medical degree required only a brief apprenticeship and three or four months of lectures at a proprietary medical school of questionable quality. Indeed, at the time Kit Carson lived, there was a popular distrust of the medical profession. In 1830, when the first of a dozen editions of J.C. Gunn's *Domestic Medicine* was published, the author voiced what many a frontier man probably had muttered: The medical profession was secretive and greedy and with a few simple rules, with some common sense and of course Gunn's book, anyone could practice medicine.

Amputations, for instance, could be performed by anyone with ordinary dexterity, firmness, and a few common tools. A.G. Goodlett, who published his *Family Physician* in 1838, emphasized the point, "Any man, unless he is an idiot or an absolute fool, can perform this operation." Twenty years later, during the Civil War, it was the most common surgical procedure. It was amputation...for frost-bite, for bad fractures, and for gunshots. The field surgery kit used by the Union Army fit in a small box. The tools it contained—a bone saw and skull-piercing trepans—give silent testimony to the common procedures: amputation of extremities and trepanning in cases of head wounds.

Kit Carson notes Broadus was "prepared for any experiment." Although the sparse words leave much to conjecture, part of that preparation for the impending pain of the razor and saw may have been the frontier man's wonder drug. Whiskey was useful for "whatever ails you" and was thought to vitalize the victim. Unfortunately, it was often used while the victim was in shock and tended to dangerously lower blood pressure. Less likely would have been the fortuitous possession of the popular favorite of many pioneer doctors —laudanum, the tincture of opium.

George A. Otis in the *Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* pays tribute to the usefulness of opium in the Civil War: "It was used almost universally in all cases of severe wounds, and was found peculiarly useful in penetrating wounds of the chest, in quieting the nervous system, and, indirectly, in moderating hemorrhage." In pharmacological terms, opium provides pain relief both by increasing the sensory threshold for pain and also by altering its perception leading some patients to say, "I have just as much pain, but it doesn't hurt as bad." It also depresses the cough reflex, useful in cases of chest wounds.

But out in the wilderness, one had to use what was around. That meant stopping the bleeding with a heated kingbolt and a plaster of tar. The more things change the more they stay the same. Cauterization by burning oil had been an ancient method of choice for dealing with the poisons of wounds. And the modern view would have to agree that a heated kingbolt would both sterilize and cauterize.

Of course there were some less drastic known methods. J.C. Gunn in his book offered the following advice:

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First thing to be done in the treatment of a wound, especially where blood vessels are severed and there is much hemorrhage is to stop the bleeding. If the bleeding is but slight, or there is no artery severed, the free application of cold water may be sufficient to check it; or salt and water or a solution of alum in water. If these fail...sprinkle on a portion of powdered burnt copperas, until it decomposes and becomes dry and of a red color, then pulverize it, and it is ready for use. It forms an excellent styptic. If an artery has been severed.. tie the artery. Get hold of the artery either with a pair of forceps or tweezers or with your fingers

Have someone to tie it with a silk or flax thread.

But if you have just sawed someone's arm off in the field, and the whiskey is wearing off, a hot kingbolt would come to mind a whole lot quicker than laboriously tying silk threads. The plaster of tar epitomizes the genius of necessity. It probably helped prevent any later oozing and served to protect the wound from outside contagion.

Later Kit Carson would be exposed to the Native American method of wound care, applying powders and infusions and leaving the wound open to air. This method probably promoted drainage and helped healing. But certainly that plaster of tar had good results. Three months later when the group reached Santa Fe, the patient was without his arm but alive and well.

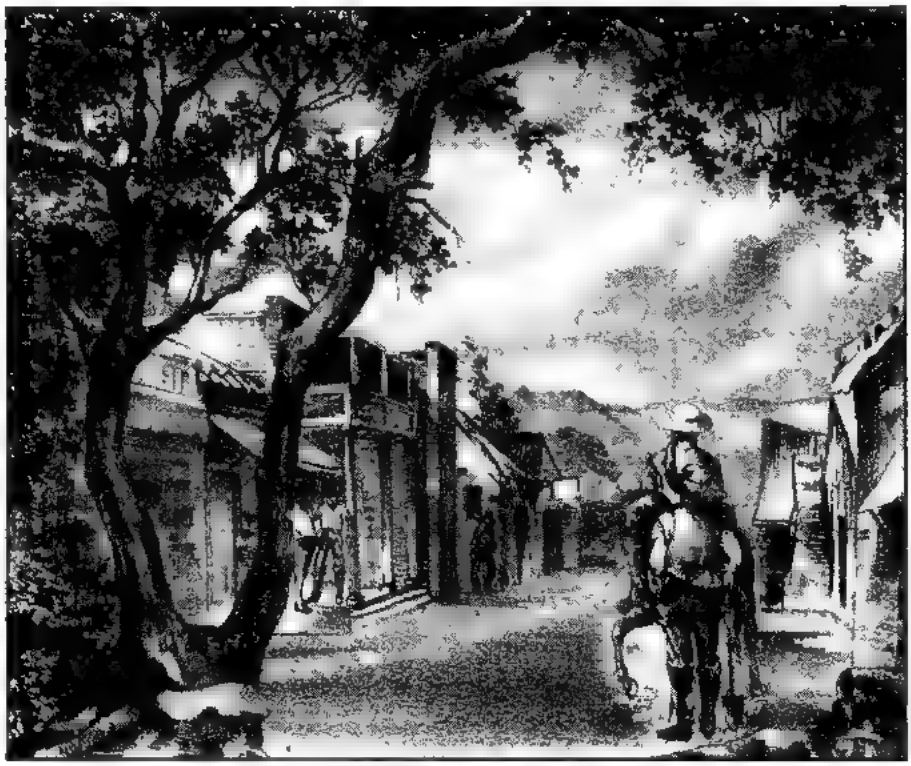
Frontier medicine, the practical distillation of centuries of medical and surgical controversy into simple decisive action, had succeeded. And the plain and simple truth is, you just can't argue with success.

NATURAL HISTORY OF A HANGING TREE

By Richard Ferber

It stood all by itself on the east side of Main Street, just across from the Louisiana House, in the new little mining town of Jackson, California. Gold camps were usually denuded places—miners cut down every piece of firewood in sight—and no one remembers why the town fathers spared this particular tree. Perhaps they merely valued its shelter; the Interior Live Oak, Donald Culrose Peattie said, "is a mansion of shade to the hot and dusty traveler." Or perhaps they had a sense of the future. Whatever the reason, this grand oak would become for a time the most famous tree in all of California. Between 1851 and 1855, ten men would be lynched from its lovely branches.

The scientific name for the species is *Quercus wislizeni*. General description: thick, rough bark; green leaves above, yellow below; smooth acorns. It is common on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. At maturity it can reach a height of seventy-five feet. On March 18, 1851, when one Coyote Joe was introduced to it, the Hanging Tree stood about sixty-feet tall. Typical of the kind, its branches arched upward gracefully, like a fan, towering above Jackson's false fronts; but one branch, about fifteen feet above street level, was conveniently horizontal.



Amador County Archives

The Jackson, California, Hanging Tree, circa 1853.

Coyote Joe was an Indian; he was also an alleged murderer. During the previous summer he and another Indian named Jim had been arrested for killing a blacksmith in a gulch a mile or so up Jackson Creek. As the town hadn't gotten around to building a jail yet, the men were sent down to Stockton's make-shift jail, a schooner tied up at the wharf.

Nine months passed, and Joe and Jim somehow got loose. Had they escaped, or had the court in Stockton decided there wasn't enough evidence to hold them any longer and set them free? Nobody knows for sure, and apparently nobody back in Jackson bothered to find out. The town was no different than any other California gold camp. Reality came early: very few men were going to get rich digging for gold, or even make a decent living. Most would be out of luck, poorer than when they started, envious, disgruntled, sullen, with time on their hands and not much entertainment; all the makings of a mob.

And it was a mob that was waiting the day Coyote Joe returned to Jackson. Perhaps he was innocent, perhaps he was naive, perhaps he was none too bright. At any rate, Joe became the tree's first victim.

Two months later, on a halcyon day in spring, blackbirds came back from the south and began to gather in the Hanging Tree's upper branches, and a Mexican got in an argument with his brother-in-law and killed him

"Mexican Hung at Jackson, Calaveras County," was how the Sacramento *Union* described the ensuing consequences. No name—"Mexican" was enough—though the newspaper had all the other facts, including the date, June 24, 1851, and even the time of day, 4:00 PM.

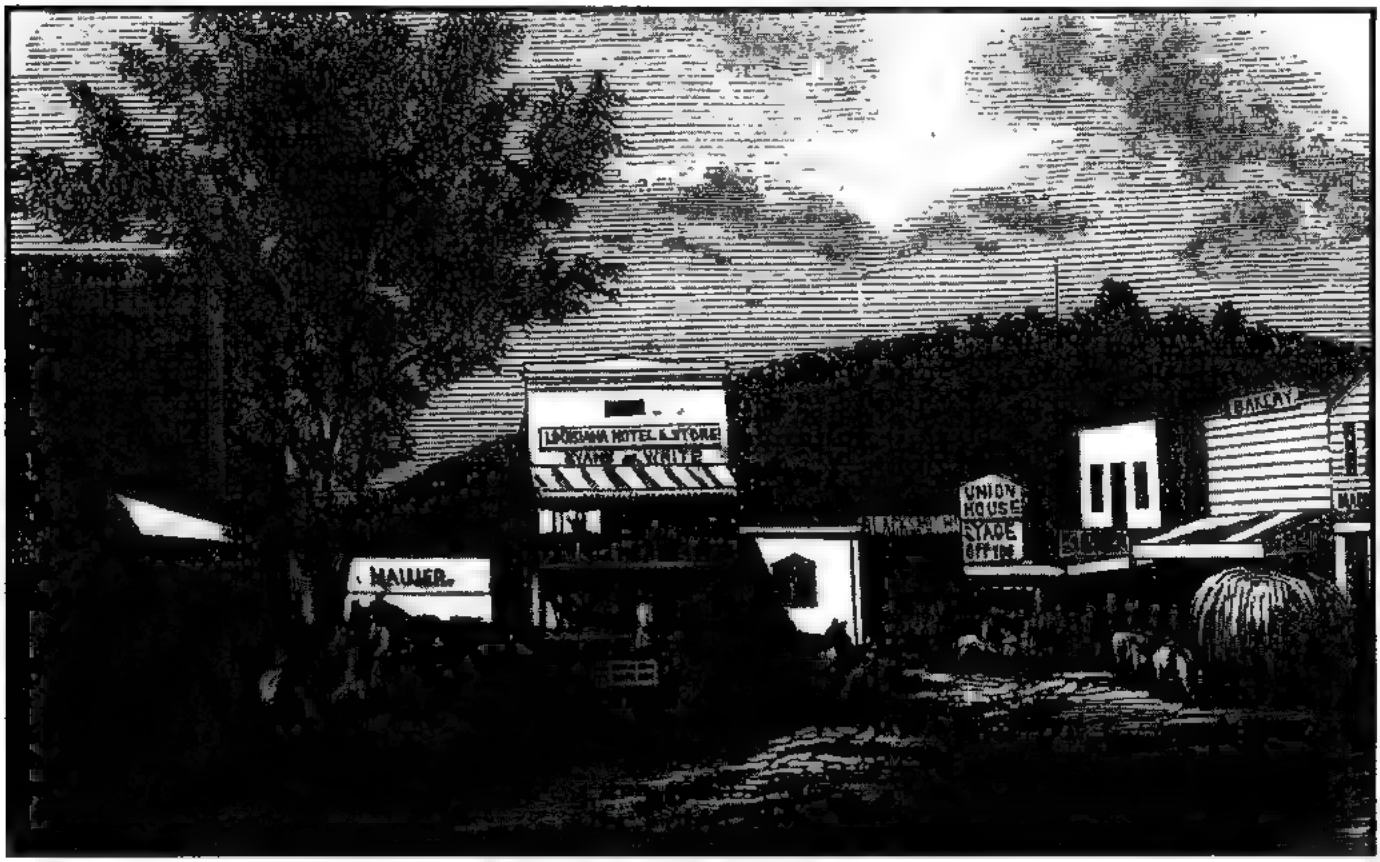
This omission was hardly surprising. Californians, most of whom had just arrived, had little regard for the state's original settlers (and even less for its original inhabitants). J.D. Mason, in his *History of Amador County,* no doubt expressed the popular opinion of the time; he called Mexicans, "The indolent native, fond of his siestas and cigarettes, proud of the smallest quantity of Castilean blood, and holding in utter abhorrence laborious occupations."

Still, this attitude had not prevented the unnamed Mexican from receiving a fair trial, of sorts. The affair was held in a gambling hall, and it was a suitable place: it was large enough to hold a good-sized crowd; it was conveniently located just a door or two away from *Quercus wislizeni;* and it had a bar. After a few drinks, the verdict was rendered and the man from the *Union* rushed off to file his dispatch.

ANOTHER YEAR PASSED. As spring buds began to show, two sleeping French prospectors were attacked in their tent in a place called Squaw Gulch. One of the Frenchmen was stabbed thirteen times and died immediately. The other was stabbed only six times, and death took longer. Meanwhile, a man named Cheverino was picked up on the Calaveras River for stealing a horse there. He was taken up to Jackson, arraigned by Justice William McDowell, and conveniently charged with the Squaw Gulch murders.

The judge's decision, even at the time, seemed a little fragile. For one thing, the Calaveras lay far to the south. For another, how could the expiring Frenchman, in a pitch dark tent, in an equally dark gulch, have gotten a decent enough look at this assailant to identify him? The Calaveras *Chronicle,* published in Mokelumne Hill, stated flatly that Cheverino had been charged without a particle of evidence and that Judge McDowell was "in any but a fit state to sit upon the bench."

But sit he did, and he was unmoved. Cheverino stayed where he was, in Jackson's new log jail, though he didn't stay there for long. On June 9, 1852, a citizen mob took him away, down to the Hanging Tree. Although the tree was well-lit from the gambling hall and the Louisiana House and Astor House



Amador County Archives

Jackson, California, 1854.

across the street, the job was somehow botched. Cheverino, while dangling in the air, got his hands free, clutched the rope above his head and hung on, literally, for dear life. He had to be lowered to the ground, his hands retied, and properly hoisted again. Cheverino's death should have been the end of the Squaw Gulch affair, but it wasn't

Down in Stockton, two days after Cheverino was lynched, someone stole Thomas Ireland's favorite buggy horse. The animal was wearing new shoes, and Ireland had little trouble tracking it to Sacramento and identifiying the thief as a Mexican named Mariano. In the goldfields, horse theft wasn't quite the serious matter it would become out on the open plains, where a man was all but helpless without a horse, but it was plenty serious and Mariano was badly frightened. He confessed willingly enough and then, perhaps thinking that he wasn't being sufficiently ingratiating, offered some information about a friend of his named Cruz Flores.

Flores, Mariano claimed, was involved in the murder of the two Frenchmen at Squaw Gulch. The next day Cruz Flores was arrested by Sheriff B.B. Marshall, who handcuffed him and escorted him south on the stage to Calaveras County. Ordinarily, the sheriff would have delivered his prisoner to Jackson, the jurisdiction of the murders, but things had been a little anarchical in Jackson lately. Flores was headed, instead, for Mokelumne Hill, which had a more substantial jail and a more conventional system of justice. Unfortunately for Cruz Flores, Jackson was a regular stop on the line and, when the stage came rolling in, the town, according to one account, "was swarming with people, mostly Frenchmen, all armed with pistols and laboring under a good deal of excitement."

Apparently Sheriff Marshall took one look and decided to fight for conventional justice another day. He offered no resistance when the mob dragged Flores off the stage and marched him down to the waiting tree. It was broad daylight, but things didn't go much better than when Cheverino had been strung up in half-light. Somehow Flores' arm was broken. The procedure was further interrupted by a man whose motive was unknown, but who perhaps shared Sheriff Marshall's notions of justice. Each time Flores was raised skyward, the man grabbed Flores' legs and pulled him back to earth. Finally, the man was peeled away from Flores' body, and at last it was over for the fourth victim of Jackson's Hanging Tree.

The winter of 1853 was a hard one. Chickadees and nuthatches, driven by the snows in the mountains, came down to search for insects in the crevasses of the Hanging Tree, and Joaquin Murrieta came up into the county from the south.

"That there was a Sonoran named Joaquin Murieta [sic] who lived in California during the Gold Rush now seems incontrovertible," said the distinguished scholar Raymond F. Wood, as though he were unwilling to testify to anything else about the man. And it is true that the Murrieta legend was mostly myth, and partly a figment of the imagination. And there may have been more than one of him. Often he was seen in one gold camp, and then another, at the same time. Still, there was no question of who rode into Calaveras County that winter.

Joaquin and his bunch preyed on the Chinese. In the next few months, at least a dozen Chinese were killed and relieved of their gold dust, all without attracting much attention. In those days, and in that place, Chinese didn't count for much, except among themselves; they were even lower on the scale than Mexicans; lower, perhaps, than even Indians.

Joseph Lake, however, was another matter. Some people swore they had seen Joaquin himself cut down Lake, the popular Jackson butcher; others thought it was one of his riders. The important thing was that Lake was no Chinese; he was an American, a white man, and the country rose. "Bells rang out and people beat on drums." Posses formed up and rode out from everywhere— from Fiddletown and Sutter Creek, from Buena Vista and Possum Bar, and from Ophir Camp.

It was near Ophir Camp that one of the posses came up on a gathering of Mexicans and, after a little sorting out, arrested a man named Antonio Valencia for Lake's murder. The records aren't clear as to exactly how his guilt was established. The San Joaquin *Republican* claimed that he was "betrayed by a woman."

Valencia was taken to Jackson, and the Hanging Tree's waiting limbs, as a rope was prepared. By now, the mob had developed a routine. Valencia was strung up, then let down again for a few moments to give him a chance to confess. A confession never came.

Joaquin himself rode on for a time, accounting for five or six more murdered Chinese, until Captain Harry Love and his rangers caught up with him somewhere else and brought in his head. Or at least somebody's head.

As summer temperatures in Jackson reached well into the nineties and beyond in 1853, Postmaster Harry Mann got in the habit of tying up his half-tame bear in the shade of the Hanging Tree. That meant town idlers had to seek

Apparently Sheriff Marshall took one look and decided to fight for conventional justice another day. He offered no resistance when the mob dragged Flores off the stage and marched him down to the waiting tree.

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relief elsewhere from the broiling sun. This may have made them more short-tempered than usual, for when a Chilean was caught trying to rob a camp of Chinese, they hanged the man without benefit of pseudo-trial or ceremony. The newspapers didn't bother to give him a name, either—simply victim number six.

By the spring of the next year, the Hanging Tree still stood in solitary splendor, though by now the splendor had been somewhat modified. Live oaks have a habit of branching at ground level and forming a wide canopy, sometimes as much as sixty feet in circumference. This would hardly do in the narrow streets of a gold camp, so the tree had been severely pruned and, by the time Christopher Bennet met up with it, only two great limbs remained.

Bennet was an anomaly in the tree's long natural history; he was white. He was also a horse thief who stole the wrong horse. The animal was valued at over $300, a lot of money for a horse in those days. The horse belonged to Evans and Askey, proprietors of the Louisiana House, and two very persistent gentlemen. Bennet rode south, then circled back and got on the Drytown Road, heading north. Evans and Askey dogged his heels, a day behind. As Bennet crossed the Consumnes on the ferry, Evans and Askey followed. They lost the trail for awhile at a place called Mud Springs, picked it up again, and finally nabbing Bennet near Bridgeport, in Nevada County. His "trial" took place more or less at the scene of the crime—the front steps of the Louisiana House. It lasted about two minutes. Bennet was hanged in the cold, dark dawn on March 23, 1854.

By the summer of 1855, the Hanging Tree had seen better days. It had been cut and carved on and, like most venerable oaks of the species, it was probably plagued by termites and dry rot. Yet the great event of its life was still to come. The event was called the Rancheria Massacre, and it was ugly. The town of Rancheria lay about five miles northwest of Jackson. It had once been a favorite camping spot of the local Indians, the Miwoks. When the Gold Rush struck, it became for a time a roaring camp. Then the color began to fade and it went back to more somnolent ways, half-deserted, particularly in summer, when there wasn't enough water in the creek to work the diggings.

ON THE NIGHT OF August 6, the town was especially quiet. Although details vary, somewhere between nine or twelve men walked into town. One of them may have been of mixed blood, referred to as "Americano"; the rest were without question what Mason called "ordinary Mexican types," among them Manual Castro and Rafael Escobar. They had spent the previous couple of days robbing Chinese along Dry Creek. Now they walked up to the hotel and the general store next door, split up, and went inside. It was about nine o'clock. Eugene Francis, the store owner, was getting ready to close up for the night and had already locked the safe. He was hacked on the legs and back with an axe, and left for dead. The bandits worked on the safe for awhile, but when gunfire broke out in the hotel, they rushed next door.

The hotel had a big barroom with ten card tables. That night only one of the tables was in use. Four men were playing poker. One of the players, Uriah Michener, was killed outright. So was a second player, Sam Wilson. His brother, Dave, was wounded. The fourth unidentified player was also wounded. An onlooker, the town simpleton, proved not so dumb after all; he dived under a table and played dead.

In the confusion, Michael Dynan, the hotel's proprietor, dashed up to the second floor and jumped out a window. He left two children asleep upstairs, and a wife downstairs, in the dining room. One of the bandits— many believe it was Rafael Escobar— went in and found her there. She was shot twice while trying to climb out a window. As she lay dying on the ground outside, Mrs. Dynan was shot again.

By now four people were dead, and it still wasn't over. The bandits gathered up three or four pokes of gold dust and ran back to the general store. Proprietor Francis' blood was on the floor, but Francis was gone. A couple of the bandits went to work on the safe; the rest of the bunch went outside looking for the wounded man. They thought they found him and probably never knew they hadn't. Francis was found the next morning by a relief party, and died while his left leg was being amputated. What the banditti had found on the darkened hillside was an Indian sleeping off a drunk, from which he never awakened. He was stabbed to death.

The safe gave up anywhere from $800 to $25,000; the records are contradictory. The bandits went across the street to the hotel livery and rode out on fresh horses. They rode west toward the Ione Valley, then swung south toward the sheltering canyons of the Mokelumne.

But for most of the riders— and many other Mexicans besides— there would be no shelter.

"Whereas in view of the outrageous depredations committed by Spanish and Mexican robbers or banditti in the cold-blooded murder of some of our most respected citizens, and the fiend-like butchery of one American lady and believing as we do, that self-preservation is the first law of nature, therefore..."

That was the beginning of a proclamation issued by what was now Amador County (it had split off from Calaveras in 1854) The proclamation declared that all Spanish-speaking persons— Mexicans, Chileans, Bolivians, man, woman, and child—were to be expelled from the country and, if that seemed like harsh retribution, worse was to come. Sheriff William A. Phoenix acted properly enough. He swore in a posse and arrived at Rancheria before three o'clock the next morning, somehow got a bad tip and rode hard to the north toward Fiddletown. He was hardly gone before news of the massacre

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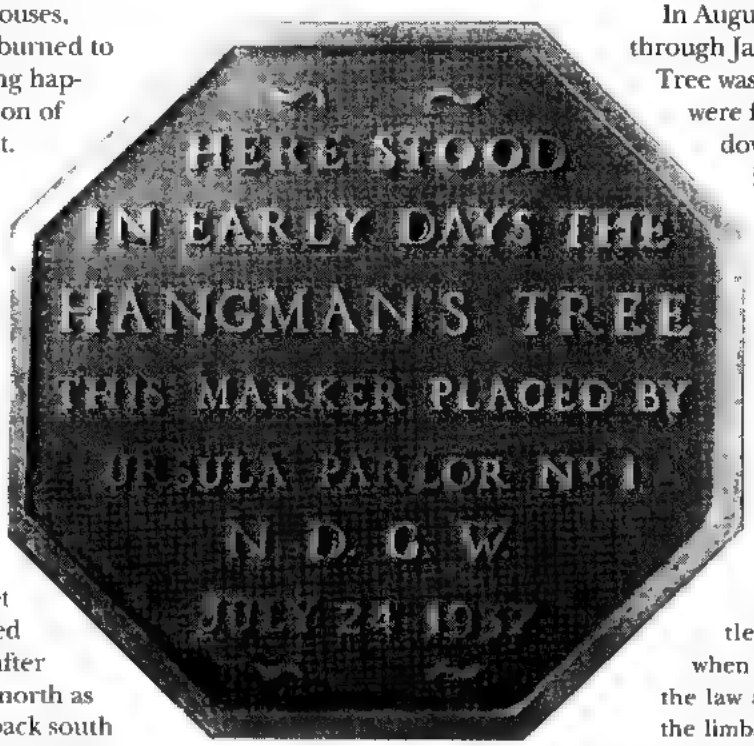
spread, and the dance started. Bells began to ring again. Pistols and rifles, unused since the Murrieta raids, were hauled out and oiled. Ropes were kneaded into suppleness and knots tied. Gangs formed, and men with darker skin were run to the ground.

The first of these were three Mexicans found near Rancheria with certain jewelry in their possession. They were probably innocent; there was no evidence of any jewelry being taken during the robbery. Still, they were strung up. A band of Indians, inflamed by the death of their tribesman, found five or six Mexicans in a gulch near Drytown and butchered them. In Sutter Creek, all the Mexicans' houses, shacks, and shanties were burned to the ground. The same thing happened in the Chilean section of Dry Creek called Chile Flat. The nearby Catholic Church was also burned. Fire was everywhere. In Campo Seco, a Mexican was trapped inside a blazing tent; he came out in a blaze of gunfire, and died. In another part of the county, another Mexican tried to hide out in a coyote den; when brush in the entrance of the den was set afire, he resigned and killed himself. Sheriff Phoenix, after pursuing phantoms as far north as El Dorado County, came back south and ran into the real thing: a bandit who he tried to take alive and who shot him in the heart. And so on. At last count, seven Americans and at least a couple dozen Mexicans were dead, maybe more.

AND THE TOLL went on. Back in Jackson the Hanging Tree stood ready. A man was being held in jail as a suspect in the massacre. It was probably his complexion that decided his fate. He was taken to the tree and hanged— another of those no-name Mexicans, the eighth victim.

Manual Castro was next. He was the wrong complexion, too, and hadn't gotten out of the county quite fast enough. On August 7 he tried to fight it out with a posse at a dance hall in Texas Bar, and lost. He lay out in back with a bullet in his spine, and he must have been convinced he was dying. Si, he said, he had been at Rancheria that night, and so had his compadre, Rafael Escobar; it was Escobar who had killed the unfortunate Mrs. Dynan, struggling at the window. *"Clemencia, Senors,"* he said. *"Madre de Dios! Me duele mucho!"* Somehow he made it through the night. The next morning he took the long trip to Jackson to die another way, in the oak's embrace.



Amador County Archives

A marker was placed on the site of the Jackson Hanging Tree in 1937.

Rafael Escobar was run down in Columbia, Tuolumne County, on August 14. He denied being in Rancheria on the night of the murders, though he did admit that he had been nearby earlier in the day, in a dining room at Drytown. He was taken up to Jackson and, on August 15, stood trial under the hot sun, on the dusty street. The trial was short; he pleaded innocent and was found guilty. He must have cared a good deal about how he looked when he went to meet his Maker, for he asked that his face be washed and his hair combed. He also asked for a brandy and a priest, but got only the brandy. After he was strung up, he was let down again to give him a chance to confess— and by now, despite the clean face and the combed hair, he was not a pretty sight.

"His eyes rolled," said historian Larry Ceneto. "His body and head jumped involuntarily, and his throat constantly gurgled."

He was lifted into the air a final time and became the tree's tenth and last victim.

In August of 1862, a fire swept through Jackson and the Hanging Tree was badly charred. Its days were finally over; it was cut down. A plaque was put up in its place and is still there, kept polished for the benefit of the passing tourists. The Stockton *Independent,* among other newspapers, wrote a glowing obituary. The tree, it said,

> ...was remarkable for something more than shade and ornament; for in the early settlement of that county, when society was chaotic, and the law almost impossible, from the limbs of this tree were hung, at different times, thirteen [sic] men, for various infamous crimes. It was certainly the most remarkable tree in the State....

The tribute was fitting. Coyote Joe, Cheverino, Flores, Valencia, Bennet, Castro, Escobar, and three no-names, had all adorned the oak's graceful branches. Yet such a noble tree might have been willing to settle for something less—like a mere nest of robins.

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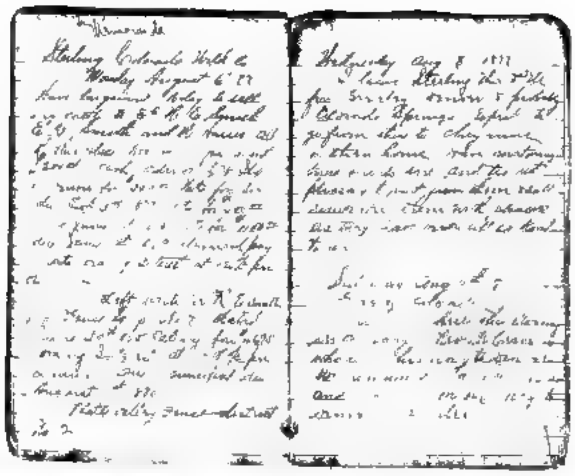
Round Up 1877

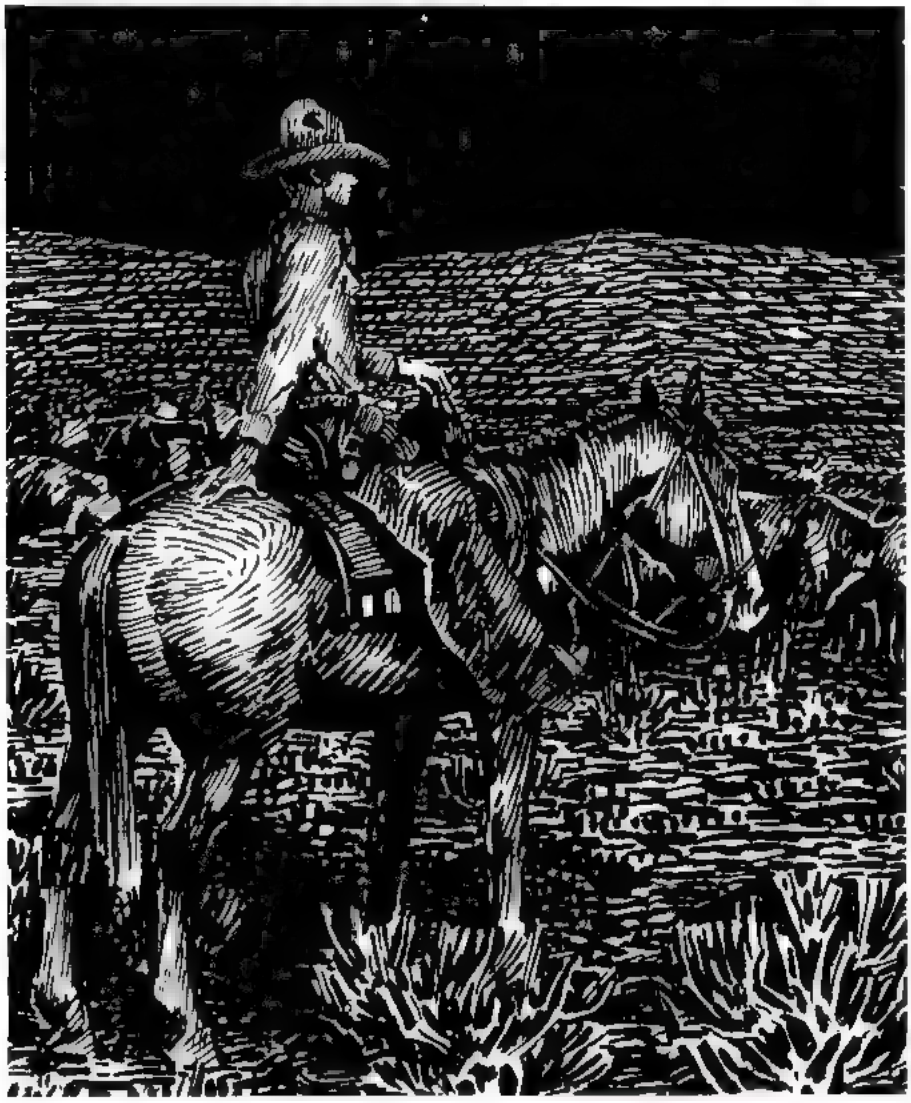


By Ann W. Childs

Illustrated by Al Napoletano

March 1877 finds David Wallace Springer ready to start his second trip west from his home in Indiana. October 20, would mark the end of his three-year contract with the rancher in Sterling, Colorado, with whom he had entrusted his cattle. Springer planned to participate in the round-up of his cattle before the deadline.

Since leaving the West in November of 1874, David W. Springer had led a busy, prosperous life. A half interest in a successful business in Julesburg, Colorado, selling "Groceries, Grain and Hunters' Supplies, Buffalo Robes, Hides, Furs and Game," made Springer's return to Indiana possible. He purchased a grocery store in Richmond, Indiana, not far from his family home, and the home of his sister, Myra, who was raising his four-year-old daughter, May. Although absent from them most of the time, Springer was able to provide for Myra and May financially until his death.



As these investments prospered, he was free to travel. He toured the East Coast the month of September 1876, spending two weeks at Philadelphia's "International Exposition."

FROM HIS DIARY:

"Thursday evening April 19 1877 (Indianapolis) Exactly two years to a day since I returned from Colorado. I go to look after my...cattle which I have at Sterling Weld County Colorado."

The diary notes a stop en route to visit family members in Iowa and Nebraska.

"Wednesday morning Apl 25. Arrived in Omaha remained few hours only taking the Emigrant train to Fremont was fortunate to procure half fare rates to Cheyenne Wyoming.

"Friday morning Apl 27th [.] Leaving for Julesburg where I am to take the Stage for Sterling 50 odd miles from Julesburg up the South Platte River my present destination[.]

"May 1st Julesburg [Colorado]. Arriving here...I can not get away today...the mail carrier who brings

a Stage to carry the mails and passengers left his Stage at home and came down horseback And I must get a horse from Someone or walk…The country looks barren enough grass dead very little green grass having come up yet…Cattle around Julesburg look Slim and poor Julesburg has not improved any that I can discover…Most of the roughs that used to live here have gone away and the place Seems to be a more decent place than when I was the Agent[.]

"Tuesday May 2nd 1877[.] I leave for Sterling 50 miles up River to my Ranch horseback.

"Sterling May 3rd 1877[.] Arrived this place today find my Stock all Scattered all over the country up & down the river a very hard Winter has killed quite a number of cattle I can not tell how many of mine have been lost until after the general round ups which commences in a few days[.]

"Thursday May 4[.]I go over to Sidney today in company with Mr. Pruitt one of the men who has charge of my cattle[.]

"Friday May 5th…Sidney is one of the liveliest of towns, if a Town of 2 thousand people is claimed with at least 41 Saloons this is one of the starting or outfittings points for the Black Hills and here we find congregated a general conglomeration of people and probably as hard a Set of people as can be found in the West Bar rooms with dance halls and gambling tables…in open view to the world women with more brass than virtue Surrounding the gamblers and bummers importuning them for a treat…Tomorrow return to Sterling[.]

"Saturday May 5th 1877[.] Sterling…returned today morning very disagreeable…wind …rain and cold…Sleeping on the ground…meals cooked on camp fire consisting of Coffee pork & bread reminding me of times past Seem to fall in with the ways and styles of the Westerners with ease….

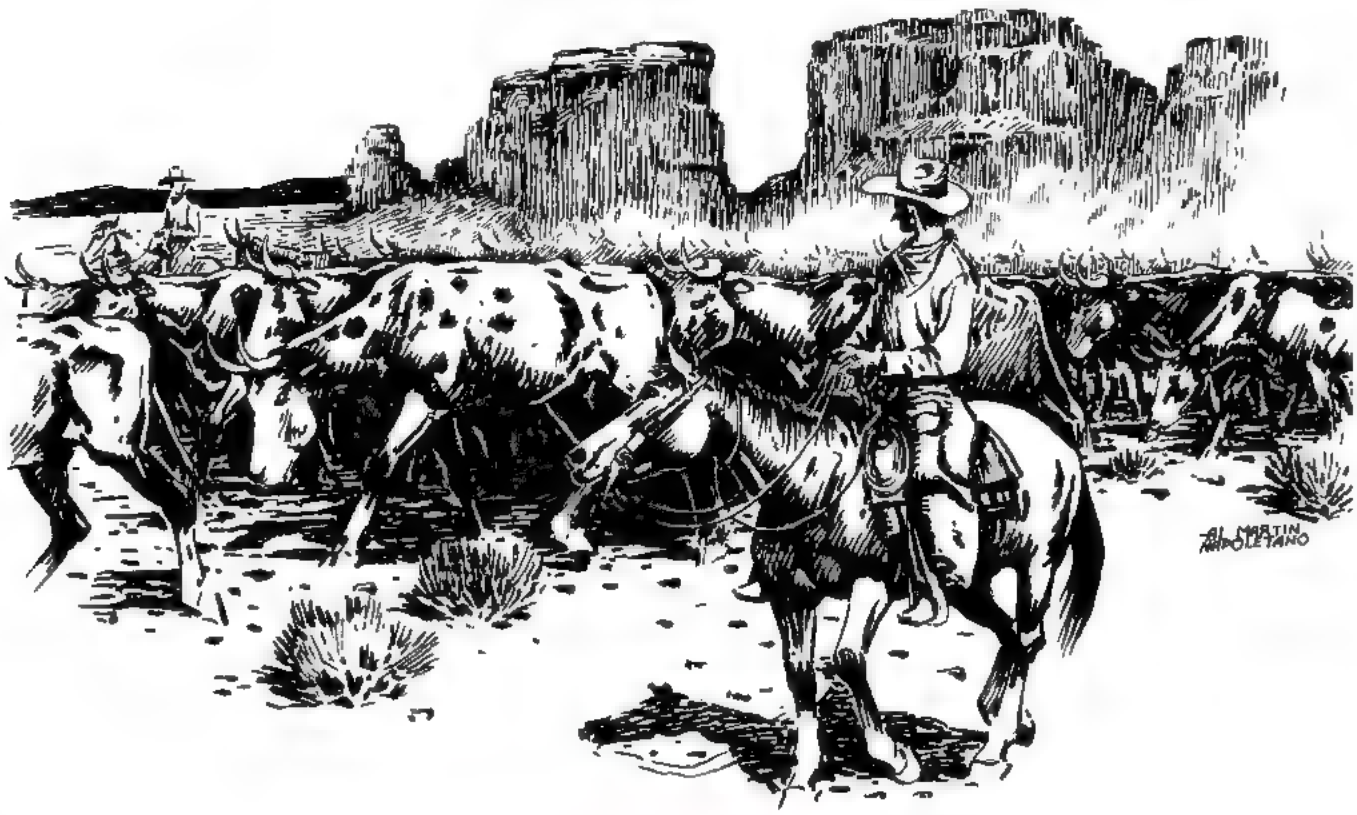
"Sunday May 7[.] Went to church or meeting one of improvements in Valley hold service in private houses…All houses being Small none of them containing more than 2 rooms most of them only one[.] The people are building a new School house (of sod) Tomorrow all are to turn out to assist building or to finish…I shall give them a few days of my Services[.]

"The general round-up is to commence on the 10th at North Platte coming up the Platte to Julesburg there it would divide the Wyoming Men going up Lodge Pole Creek the Colorado cattle men coming up the Platte[.] The Colorado round-up commencing at Julesburg June 1st[.]

"This will take some time and my best course will be to wait until it is over and brand and then I can tell Just how many cattle I have and whether my investment has been a profitable one or not[.]

"Thursday May 17th[.] Went out hunting cattle found only Seven head Cattle are very badly Scattered and will require the general round-up to ascertain how many we have[.] My heart was made glad by the receipt of couple of letters one of them was from Sister Myra[;] friends at home all well[.]

"Sunday May 27th[.] In camp on the River Platte about 5 miles below Julesburg I find a great many Cattle



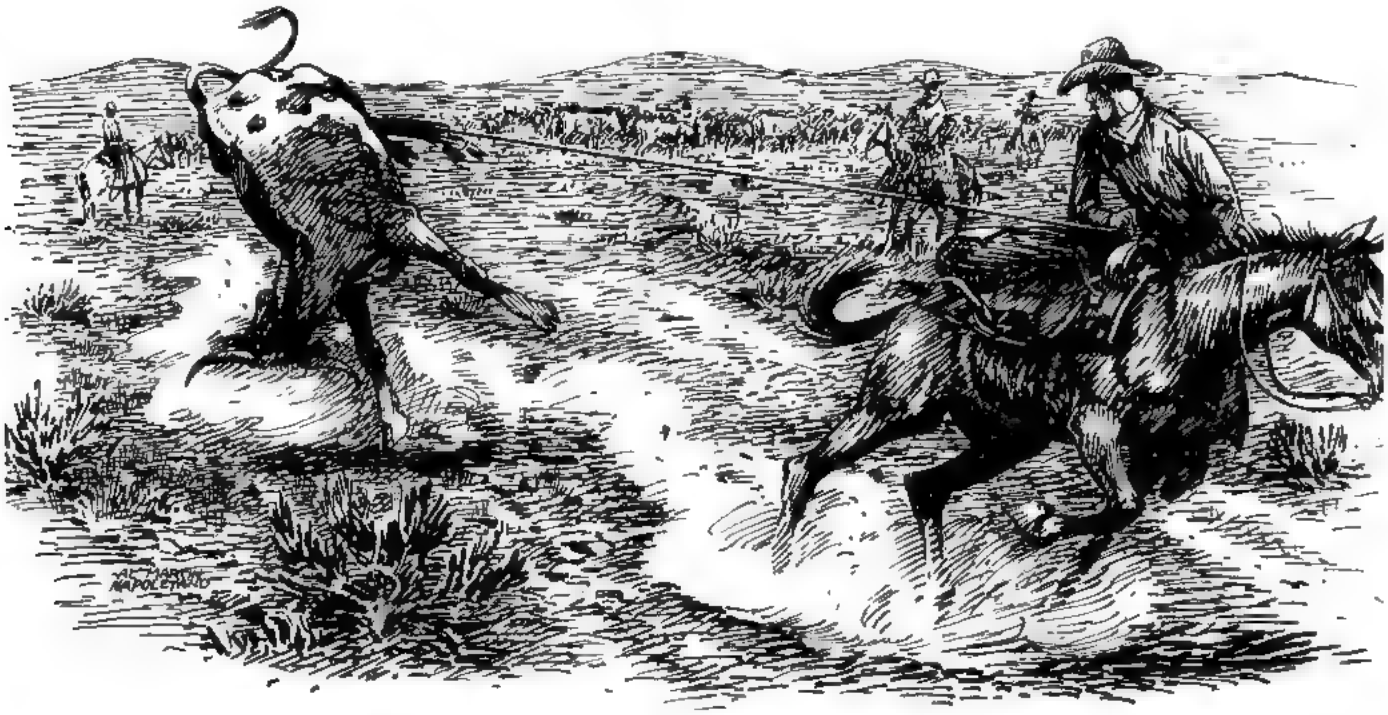
on the Range here that belong way up the River as far as Greeley and hundreds of them belonging to Rangers[,] this side Cattle are badly scattered and there is plenty of work to do...will take us Some time to do[.] These Round Ups are very interesting for a novice to watch. Some fine horsemanship displayed by the "Cow-boys" in cutting out the...steers[.] Some of them as wild as Deers[.] The throwing of the Lasso over the horns of a Steer and by a turn of the horse and a quick run coming up ahead of the animal bringing the Lasso tight and then by a Sudden movement the Lasso is brought up against his heels So Strongly that down comes the animal as though he was Shot[.] This work requires a great deal of practice a horse that understands his business as the Lasso is tied to the horn of the Saddle and no little amount of nerve is required to make the action a success[.]

"The Stock man...horses and helpers all on hand...A Captain is appointed...to direct and control...appoints Lieutenants to work with smaller parties at different places to gather all of the cattle leaving not a one and at some convenient point...are brought to a stand and a circle of horsemen is formed around them[.] One two or more parties go in the circle and drive out those cattle belonging to them which they know by the brand generally on their left hip[.]

"After cutting out...they are run to a point some little distance and there held until all that belong to the party are taken from the circle[.] This band is called the calf pen and probably owned by dozen or more men who as they pass cut their cattle out and leave them on the Range[,]except the Calves which are first taken to their corral and branded and set adrift again to graze for another year[.] Cattle are not disturbed again until the Fall when the fat Steers are gathered and shipped to the market[.]

"June 1st 1877 ..We have been here several days gathering and rounding up...have found great many but only few of mine[.] This morning...our party dividing[,] part going up the Platte the rest going up Lodge Pole Creek[.] I go with the party up the Creek[.] This has been the one of the roughest days imaginable the wind blowing hard and cold[.] My face is tanned by the Sun and Wind like a Mexican[.] Such weather as this would soon make one feel this kind of life has but very little charm in it[.]

"Sunday June 3rd '77[.] In camp five miles west of Sidney moved about 12 to 14 miles today passing through Sidney where I stopped to write a couple of letters[.] We are getting along nicely seem to advance with out a hindrance[.] we met the parties who have been rounding up West and coming East this eve [,] So tomorrow we Strike off South West towards the Platte River[.] Think we will reach the River in two or three days and probably finish our work...in ten days or two weeks[.] The country between Lodge Pole Creek and South Platte River is high rolling Prairie and no



Water except a few water holes So our Stock are drifting off from one Stream generally go over to the other before stopping....Our force is greatly diminished since leaving Julesburg[.]

"June 10 1877[.] In camp at Pawnee Creek Colorado...have found about one hundred of mine and expect to find great many more in three or four days...very bad weather...in the Saddle most of the time today commencing at Six and came in at 8:30 PM riding continually except about two hours for dinner[.] Tomorrow we move about twenty miles to Prairie Buttes[.] These Buttes are Said to be a natural curiosity Situated on a level piece of Prairie running perpendicular about two or three hundred feet[.]

"June 11th, 1877[.] getting pretty broken-in to camping life[.] For night herding each party must hold their own cattle...every man takes his turn herding nights[.]

"June 13th 1877[.] Wednesday Starting out this morning at 6 o'clock with the rest of our outfit... all of us dividing in order to get as many as possible[.] I got after a band of cattle and in chasing them among the hills lost my course and for five or six hours was lost[.] When I discovered my exact whereabouts I was twenty miles from our camp and when at 7 o'clock PM Started for camp reaching 'Water hole' where I expected to find the boys at twelve PM but found camp had been removed So I was compelled to lay out the rest of the night[.] Tired out and without blankets I lay on the ground[.] I slept waking up at half past four and reaching camp in about half hour[.] I traveled not less than 50 [or] 60 miles[.] It is all very funny now that its over but wouldn't want to repeat the experience...[.]

"June 14 Thursday[.] Pawnee Buttes drove about 20 miles today about 40 miles from the River and Same from U[nion] P[acific] Railroad desolate country[.] Only objects of interest are the Buttes which are curiosities[,] perfect Towers reaching up 2 or 3 hundred feet almost perpendicular one of them no man has ever reached the top of[.] The other one has been clumb by digging holes for steps in its Side and by clinging close to its Sides one may reach the top although running considerable risk[.]

"Saturday June 16th[.] We drove to 'Wild Horse Corral' and then to a Water hole on South Pawnee Wild Horse Corral derives its name from the fact of party few years ago building a corral to catch Wild horses of which there are a great many[;] see some every day[.] Some of the boys caught a colt today[;] he clings as close to the horses as though he was perfectly tame[.]

"Tuesday June 19th[.] Today has been a fearful hot one and miserable water we have to drink taken from these water holes is enough to make us Sick have been miserable all day[.]

"June 20th 1877[.] Am glad to reach the river again...Will be glad to have a good wash and change of clothing for I never felt the need of it more than now...[.]My work on the round-up will not last many days more when I will go to Sterling and hope for several letters from loved ones[.]

"Sterling Colo. Sunday June 24th 1877[.] Returned this morning from the Round up and glad to get back and have a clean up Shave and change of linen[.] Found a number of letters...all are prosperous & well at home Had pretty good success finding my cattle found over a hundred but did not find all[.]

"Friday June 29th '77[.] I start today on Supplementary Round up...work the country between Cedar Creek and Julesburg[.]

"July 2nd at VanTassals Ranch This has been one of the hardest days. .. Breakfast at 4:30 AM[,] dinner at 12 and Supper at 7 PM tired and hungry and must go on guard tonight[.] We do some heavy and hard riding frequently ride 50 or 60 miles and even more a day[.]

"July 8th, Sunday, Sterling [Colorado.] We came here today having finished work on the Supplementary round up and most all of the Stock men have gone home and after branding of the calves the work is about over until the time comes for gathering the fat Beeves for market...[.]The work of Stock men is not so enviable as many might think...[.]Each day a repetition of the last...[.]I may truly say that I am glad to get a good rest[.]

"May remain here only a short time. I think of selling my Stock[.]

"Tuesday July 17th '77 Sterling[.] This morning I start for Sidney...will return in couple of days[.]

"Thursday July 19th[.] Returned from Sidney this AM am getting tired of Staying here and want to be doing Something[.]

"Sterling, Colorado, Weld Co[.] Monday August 6, '77[.] Have bargained today to sell my cattle to W E. Smith, E.G. Smith, and R. Harris[,] All of this place[.] Receive payment $200 cash order on J.W. lift of Denver for $350[.] Note for $300 due Oct 5 1877[.] Note for $300 due Jan. 1st 1878[.] Note for $1100 due Jan. 1st 1879[.] deferred payments bearing Interest at 12% per annum[.]

"Left with Mr. R.E. Smith My Fence Script No. 7, dated June 30th 1875, Calling for $4,695 bearing Interest at 18% per annum and principal due August 1st 1880[.]

"Platte Valley Fence # 2.

"Wednesday Aug 8th 1877[.] I leave Sterling this PM for Greeley, Denver & probably Colorado Springs[.] Expect to go from there to Cheyenne & then home[.] Have met many Kind friends here and tis not pleasant to part from them[.]Shall remember them with pleasure[.]"

THE DIARIES AND LETTERS of David Wallace Springer continue sporadically. He never remarried. As a businessman he was successful, buying and selling properties over the next five years. Plagued by ill health, he spent his last several years traveling, in vain, in search of a healthful climate. He died at age forty-one of "consumption" at the family home in Indianapolis.

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BOOKMART

516—TREASURE OF THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS: TALES AND TRADITIONS OF THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST. *By Arthur L. Campa, foreword by J. Manuel Espinosa.* This collection includes stories of silver locked away in outlaw hoards, lost mines stacked with bars of gold, and fabulous Jesuit treasures buried when that order was expelled from New Spain. Not all of these folk treasures are of mineral wealth, however. There are also the legends of the Hermit of Las Vegas and of the loveforn nun. 223p. University of Oklahoma Press. **Paper, $12.95**

693—BLACK PIONEERS: IMAGES OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE ON THE NORTH AMERICAN FRONTIER. *By John W. Ravage.* The author has assembled an archive of 200 photographs that depict a wide range of the African-American experience in the West. Beginning with the earliest available photographs from the mid-1800s, the collection of images reconstructs our understanding of the history and contributions of blacks to the westward expansion. 218p. University of Utah Press.
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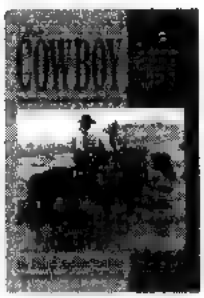
300—Volume I: A-F	**NA**
301—Volume II, G-O	**Paper, $20.00**
302—VolumeIII: P-Z	**Paper, $20.00**

466—THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE. *By Juanita Brooks.* This book remains the definitive study of the attack on an emigrant wagon train in southern Utah by Indians and Mormons. One of the worst atrocities in the history of the westward movement, the incident has generated controversy since its occurence in 1857. "Completely objective"—*Journal of the West*. 326p. University of Oklahoma Press.
Paper, $17.95



656—THE COWBOY: AN UNCONVENTIONAL HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION ON THE OLD-TIME CATTLE RANGE. *By Philip Ashton Rollins.* Rollins attempts to provide a complete, accurate handbook on the everyday life of the cowboy—trailing, herding, branding, roundup, and horsebreaking. He also discusses tools of the trade and the cowboy's personality, codes, mores and amusements. This new reprint of the 1936 edition features 31 illustrations, index and a new chapter "Highly accurate..."—*Southwest Review*. 432p. University of Oklahoma Press.
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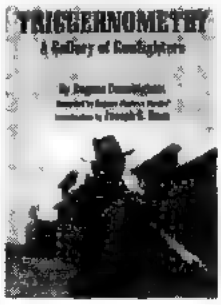
679—ROUGH RIDER: BUCKEY O'NEILL OF ARIZONA. *By Dale L. Walker.* O'Neill was famous in Arizona Territory as a gambler, lawyer, newspaperman, miner, sheriff, and politician. This fast-moving narrative takes him from the streets of Tombstone all the way to Cuba, where he won Theodore Roosevelt's admiration as the wildest and bravest of the Rough Riders. "Life in frontier Arizona is well depicted in [this] biography... [It is] a story of Irish daring."—*Southwest Chronicle*. 224p. University of Nebraska Press.
NEW SELECTION! **Paper, $12.95**



603—TRIGGERNOMETRY: A GALLERY OF GUNFIGHTERS. *By Eugene Cunningham, intro by Joseph G. Rosa.* First published in 1941, Cunningham's long popular volume features biographies of nearly a score of the Old West's most notable gunfighters, including Hardin, the Kid, Hickok, Cassidy, and Horn. A Westerner himself, Cunningham knew firsthand several of the Texas gunfighters profiled in his book. This new edition includes and extensive and updated bibliography by Rosa. 446p. University of Oklahoma Press.
Paper, $18.95

524—THE MYSTERY OF E TROOP: CUSTER'S GRAY HORSE COMPANY AT THE LITTLE BIGHORN. *By Gregory Michno.* The men of Company E of the Seventh Cavalry rode big gray horses that stood out amidst the confusion during the afternoon of June 25, 1876. The Indians later recalled seeing the horses by the river, on the bluffs, and eventually on Last Stand Hill. Their riders lay dead in a ravine after the fighting ceased. Why couldn't the army find their bones? Why didn't archaeological excavations uncover any remains? Michno finally provides the answers. 365p. Mountain Press Publishing.
Paper, $18.00

678—THE MONTANA STORIES OF FRANK LINDERMAN. Authorized Edition. *By Frank Linderman.* Linderman knew the frontier types who appear in these robust stories and sketches. A trapper in Montana in his youth, he stayed on as a publisher, politician, and businessman, beginning to write in middle age. Originally published in 1920, this book is filled with stories of rustler and hustlers, Mounties and tenderfeet, Crows and Blackfeet, mountain men, prospectors, bartenders, lawyers, townspeople, and assorted animals. 224p. University of Nebraska Press.
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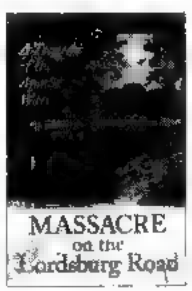

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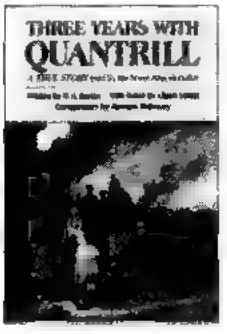

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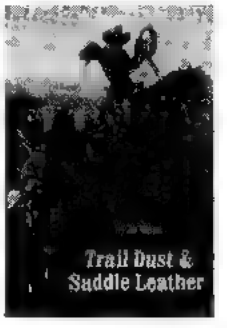

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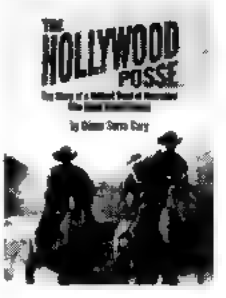

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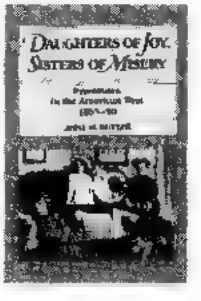

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Reviews

Billy vs. Brushy

The Return of the Outlaw Billy the Kid. By W.C. Jameson and Frederick Bean. (Republic of Texas Press, 1506 Capital Avenue, Plano, TX 75074. 256p. $16.95 Paper.)

Billy the Kid has to be the world's most resurrected individual. First you see him, then you don't. Now he's dead, next he's alive. First he was Henry McCarthy, alias Henry Antrim, alias William Bonney, alias Billy the Kid, alias Kid. Now the authors Jameson and Bean claim he's William Henry Roberts, alias William Antrim, alias Billy the Kid, alias Brushy Bill. It's enough to make a reader wonder who's on first.

The book's purpose is to establish Billy the Kid and Brushy Bill Roberts as one and the same, that Sheriff Pat Garrett did not send the Kid off to a better life on that hot New Mexico summer night in 1881. The authors claim that Billy the Kid does not lie in a Fort Sumner grave, dead at the age of twenty-one, but instead lies in a Hico, Texas, cemetery, dead of natural causes in 1950 at the age of eighty-eight.

Jameson and Bean dismiss most previous Billy the Kid biographers and historians as supporters and adherents to "prevailing and accepted theories." They all write essentially the same thing, a difference being that some historians take longer to say it than others.

To support this, the authors refer to a mountainous "over eight hundred books, thousands of articles, and uncountable studies and inquiries into the matter of the life and times of Billy the Kid...." That statement surprised me as I thought I had every book written about the Kid, and now I find out I'm short by at least 750 titles.

Jameson and Bean refer to (and dismiss) a 1988 Lincoln County Heritage Trust study whereby the Trust retained a firm to compare photo lookalikes of Billy the Kid and Brushy Bill. Their book does not mention the hundred or so individuals also contrasted with Billy the Kid. Nor did they mention that several Chicago felons showed a closer computer match to Billy the Kid than did Roberts Instead the authors accuse the Trust of having "a vested interest in...making the determination that Roberts was not the Kid."

However, the authors have a vested interest in seeing that Roberts "was" the Kid. Furthermore, the authors cite an additional study which contradicts the Trust findings. Jameson and Bean do not say who commissioned the study nor how many Billy the Kid impersonators, if any, were involved. While the Bonney/Roberts results in this case admittedly did not provide an exact likeness, or any real evidence of anything except that both persons were human beings, nevertheless the authors triumphantly announced the Billy the Kid/Brushy Bill lookalike results as "amazing" in their similarities.

While the authors mentioned a variety of discrepancies regarding Pat Garrett's account of Billy the Kid's death, they ignore the most ringing question of all about that alleged death. How could three lawmen (Garrett, Poe, and McKinney), and a community of people, reasonably believe that the Kid would not repeatedly surface again and again in his old neighborhoods and haunts? Such an appearance would have ruined Garrett, and Garrett was a proud man, the kind of sheriff who believed that one bullet in the Kid's heart helped him sleep better at night.

Still, the book has value. Those who subscribe to conspiracy theories of history will feel vindicated. Those who suspect that serious historians are gullible pawns more interested in protecting long established Billy the Kid theories than in performing serious research, well those believers will be comforted, their suspicions confirmed.

Otherwise, for those interested simply in a book dealing with what the Billy the Kid/Brushy Bill Roberts controversy is all about, well, this is it.—*Leon C. Metz, El Paso, Texas.*

Mystery of the Massacre

Massacre on the Lordsburg Road, A Tragedy of the Apache Wars. By Marc Simmons. (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354. 256 pages, 24 pictures, map. $27.95 Cloth.)

Marc Simmons enjoys doing the unusual, and his research skills have located never before published photographs and papers on one of New Mexico's greatest mysteries, what happened to little Charlie McComas, the six-year-old son of Judge Hamilton C. McComas?

In the spring of 1883, Judge McComas and his wife, Juniata were slain by Apaches, and Charlie was kidnapped. It wasn't only the senseless murder, but also the aftermath that affected New Mexicans from all walks of life The McComas family was attacked by Chato's band on a lonely, isolated stretch of road between Silver City and Lordsburg. The McComases were a prominent family on the frontier so their murders shocked everyone. Oftentimes, killings were of poor pioneer emigrants, cowboys, miners, soldiers, and the like.

The fact that their son was never found also compounded the dilemma and added to the mystery. Apaches often took young children to raise as their own. So, what was the young child's fate? Simmons does an excellent job of presenting the evidence, the history and background of the family, and the various theories as to what happened to Charlie. Did he grow to manhood and live with the Apaches as a tribal leader? Did he die an untimely death at the hands of Mexican or American troops during raids on Apache war camps or rancherias?

Simmons sheds the first light on

ROH B.TED

the McComas family's final hours and presents the first complete picture of circumstances surrounding one of the last massacres of the Indian wars. For those who are unaware of the antagonism between Apache and settler, Simmons gives a good history of the reasons behind raids and counter-raiding and terror along the borderlands.

There is also a second theme of the book. Simmons and his unraveling of the family history, locating relatives and family papers and photographs, is, in itself, a fascinating story. It presents the reader with one of the main reasons why research can be exciting and rewarding.

While academic and thorough in his exploration and research, Simmons is also a wonderful writer. The reader does not sense he is reading "history" in the usual sense! Excellent photographs accompany the written material. The book will grip general and professional readers of western and Indian history, leaving them with a greater sympathy and understanding of New Mexico's heritage.—*Lynda Sánchez, Ruidoso, New Mexico.*

Utley's Rendezvous

A Life Wild and Perilous. By Robert M. Utley. (Henry Holt, 115 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. 392p. $27.50 Cloth.)

Over the years Robert Utley's name on the spine of a book has served us well as a hallmark of quality, whether his subject has been Indians, the military, or outlaws like Lincoln's Billy the Kid. This new book, in which he reviews the history of the American fur trade in the West, is no exception to the rule. Better put, it is the story of our mountain men for, while he never forgets that the fur trade was a business for profit (though one much romanticized by fiction writers and historians alike), he wisely approaches his subject from a *biographical* point of view within a proper chronological framework.

Bob Utley could have "closed the books" on the fur trade with the last Rocky Mountain rendezvous in 1840

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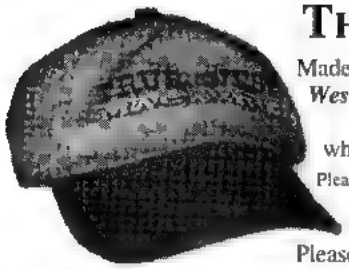

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and the commercial shift from beaver pelts to buffalo robes. But, wisely, he extends the story because of the continuing influence of ex-beaver men on Gentile and Mormon emigration; the settlement of Oregon; the seizure of California and New Mexico; even such late, mid-1850s exploration as the Pacific Railroad Survey. Hence the wisdom of his choice of words for a subtitle—"Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific." It correctly suggests that the role of these mountaineers was not just in business, or "exploitation of natural resources" as piously political correct historians would put it, but in exploration, cartography, and national expansion.

Although about only 1,000 men were involved in the trade during its heyday of the 1820s and 1830s, they played a much more important role—more political than economic—than their numbers would suggest. A remarkable army officer, Meriwether Lewis pioneered the explorations and mapping of the Far West, but his work was continued by what we would call today the private sector, beaver men, rather than by the military. Only with the belated arrival of Frémont and the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers would the exploratory role revert to the government. Even then, the Army leaned heavily on such mountain men as Kit Carson and Tom Fitzpatrick as scouts and guides.

The narrative is not revisionist or even "new" material, but a fresh and skillful retelling of the story with occasional corrections of errors, such as Washington Irving's absurd villianizing of Joe Walker in his Bonneville book. There are also many useful reminders, such as the fact that "Anglos" were in the minority in our fur trade, which was full of French-Canadians and métis, or half-bloods, some Spaniards and Iroquois, and even free blacks (or, rather, mulattoes) like Jim Beckwourth and Ed Rose.

Utley is indebted to the earlier work of Chittenden and Hafen, but it is a prodigious researcher himself, as indicated by his splendid notes, which place the titles of his bibliography in proper context. Without being pushy, he indicates his preferences in sources and his opinion of conflicting accounts in order to help the reader make good choices. His writing style is excellent, straightforward, nothing fancy, and he makes heads and tails out of the confusing company rivalries in which membership changed with the shifting loyalties of these very rugged individualists.

In short, this is a wonderful story, and an important one for the West, very well told —*Richard Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

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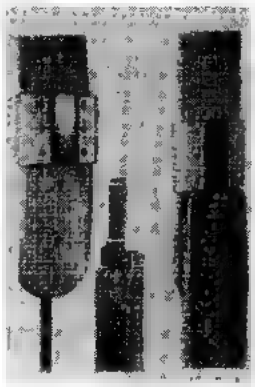

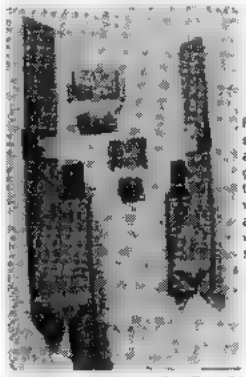

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ANSWER MAN

THEY SIRED THE SHOOTIST

Courtesy of Jim Browning

The graves of Clay Allison's parents, Jerry and Mariah Allison.

By Chuck Parsons

I have been in correspondence with Clara H. Miller of Norwalk, California, concerning the forebears of noted cattleman and gunfighter Clay Allison.

In my first little booklet on Clay, *Shadows Along the Pecos,* I erred in saying Clay's parents were John and Nancy M. Lemmond Allison. In the expanded version, *Clay Allison—Portrait of a Shootist,* this was corrected; his parents were Jerry S. and Mariah R. Brown Allison. Hopefully our readers can help us with the big question: Who were the parents of Clay's father?

Recently Jim Browning visited the Allison cemetery near Clifton, Tennessee, and took photographs. Clay's parents have a double stone, showing "Father" and "Mother" and giving their dates: he born February 14, 1811, died April 13, 1882; she born January 8, 1814 and died May 5, 1894. Also in marked graves are brothers John William and Jeremiah Monroe Allison. John returned to Tennessee after recovering from wounds received in a gunfight in Colorado. He died January 7, 1898. Jeremiah Monroe Allison, who apparently avoided the gunplay problems of John and Clay, died of an apparent heart attack on August

5, 1887. Although he may have first been buried "in an unmarked grave at the Elam Cemetery, Hemphill County, Texas" as I stated in *Portrait of a Shootist*, his remains now rest in the family plot near Clifton. Unfortunately, several stones are broken or of such worn condition that the original inscriptions cannot be read. One of the old stones bears a year of 1787.

Medicine Wheel

In addition to *True West*, Robert Kager of Mount Vernon, Washington, enjoys reading Louis L'Amour's novels of the West. In one he came across a description of a "Medicine Wheel" which supposedly had been built by Indians in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming. Mr. Kager would like to know more about what L'Amour described.

The "Medicine Wheel" is indeed a national historic landmark, located some thirty-two miles from Lovell, Wyoming (three miles off Route 14A), at an elevation of about 8,400 feet. The "Medicine Wheel" is a hub of rocks piled three feet high in a twelve foot circle. Twenty-eight "spokes" radiate from the center; at the end of the "spokes" are flat white stones. The circle is about 75 feet across and 245 feet in circumference.

Outside the wheel are six small cairns beside a rock arrow which points to Meeteetse, Wyoming, about seventy miles southwest. There the remains of a similar wheel have been discovered.

Local Indians consider this ground sacred, although archeologists and historians cannot agree on the purpose of the "wheel." Exactly why it was constructed and by whom will probably remain a subject of debate, much like the Stonehenge monuments in Great Britain. Estimates of the wheel's age range from 1200-1700 AD, but some estimates place it as having been constructed thousands of years before Christ.

Billy Simms

David Bowser, a reader from San Antonio, Texas, inquires about Billy Simms, one of the men involved in

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the killing of Ben Thompson and John King Fisher. Where is he buried?

William Henry Simms was a professional gambler who once claimed Austin, Texas, as his base of operations. Although undocumented, it is likely that Simms and gunfighter and gambler Ben Thompson both wanted to be "King of the Austin Gamblers" and one of them had to go. When Thompson ran Simms out of town, Billy established himself in San Antonio, first working with Jack Harris.

Even with Billy Simms out of Austin, the Thompson-Simms feud did not end. In 1882 Thompson killed Jack Harris. This was perhaps the compelling reason that Simms later "set up" the assassination of Thompson. Thompson and companion John King Fisher arrived in San Antonio and foolishly visited the Simms' Vaudeville Theater. Although the details are controversial, it appears Simms engineered the plot to have his old enemy killed. On March 11, 1884, Thompson died along with Fisher, who may have been in the wrong place at the wrong time, in "bad company."

Simms later resided in San Luis Obispo, California, where he died November 24, 1907. It is believed he is buried there.

Simms was the son of James M. and B.L. Simms. The parents, along with two infants, Fannie E. and Ed E., and an adult son, James M. Simms, are all buried in the Simms plot in Oakwood Cemetery in Austin. Ironically James M. Simms, Jr., was killed in a gambling fight in Austin on March 10, 1880, four years and one day before his brother was involved in the Thompson-Fisher killing. All the graves in the Oakwood Cemetery are marked.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose questions appear in "Answer Man."

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WYATT EARP'S ASHES

BY SUSAN SILVA

Information excerpted from the forthcoming book *Wyatt Earp, A Biography of the Legend*, by Lee A. Silva.

For years, suspicion, controversy, and for a time, downright mystery have darkened the final resting place of Wyatt Earp. In fact, some of Earp's closest friends didn't know where he was buried, and years later when the Tombstone Restoration Committee wanted to re-inter Wyatt's ashes in Tombstone, Arizona, even its well-connected members couldn't find him.

Truman Fisher's article, "Wyatt Earp's Multitudinous Tombstones" in the April 1997 issue of *True West* poses and answers many questions about Wyatt Earp's grave site. It sheds new light on old controversies, tells how Wyatt's "original" headstone was stolen in 1957, and ends with an account of the new headstone which was placed on Wyatt Earp's grave in 1996.

But there is a footnote which needs to be added to the intriguing story of how one of the West's most legendary lawmen came to be buried in a Jewish cemetery in Colma, California. It turns out that Earp's grieving wife, Josephine, couldn't bear to part with Wyatt, even after he died.

Wyatt Earp and Josephine Marcus had met in Tombstone, Arizona Territory, in 1880, and they began to live together in Colorado in 1882, after Wyatt left Tombstone. The facts about exactly when and where the couple was married remain elusive, but by the late 1920s, Josephine had loved and had lived with Wyatt Earp for more than forty years. When Wyatt died on January 13, 1929, the pain she felt was deep and poignant.

"...My darling," Josephine tells us in Glenn Boyer's *I Married Wyatt Earp*, "breathed his last, dying peace-

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In the May issue of True West:

The Unsinkable Molly Brown. **By Jan Holden.** Margaret Tobin Brown goes from a poor Irish family in Missouri, to the riches of Colorado's goldfields, and the infamy of the *Titantic.*

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True West *Legends: John Selman.* By Leon C. Metz. The violent life and times of the man who killed the Dark Angel...John Wesley Hardin.

Look for the May issue of True West on the newsstand April 1.

Some of the pallbearers at Wyatt Earp's funeral in Los Angeles, California, on January man is usually identified as Wyatt's attorney, William J. Hunsaker, or another friend, engineer George W. Parsons; Wyatt's life-long friend and Tombstone mentor John Hart; playwright Wilson Mizner; and cowboy movie star Tom Mix.

fully, without a struggle, like a baby going to sleep. I don't know how long I continued to hold him in my arms; I wouldn't let him go. They finally had to drag me away...."

Although Wyatt's friends, John P. Clum, William S. Hart, Wilson Mizner, Tom Mix, Charlie Welsh, and W. J. Hunsaker, made a group of distinguished pallbearers, Josephine had been too devastated to attend Wyatt's funeral. She derived some comfort from the host of people who had come to pay their last respects to her famous husband, "...the creaky old-timers," as Lee Silva writes in his forthcoming book, *Wyatt Earp*, "who shuffled into the Pierce Brothers' chapel, [and] looked as if they had showed up for a Hollywood casting call for authentic representatives of the real old West." But once the funeral was over and Wyatt's body was cremated, Josephine was lost again. She was, as quoted in *I Married Wyatt Earp*, "adrift—a rudderless ship."

Even so, Josephine was forced to consider the urgent problem of what to do with Wyatt's ashes.

According to *I Married Wyatt Earp*, Josephine had thoughts of burying Wyatt in the desert which she and Wyatt had both loved. The area around Parker, Arizona, particularly appealed to her. The site of most of their old mines, the "Happy Days" group, was only a few miles west of Parker, in the Whipple Mountains, on the California side of the Colorado River. As an alternative, there was the cemetery in the dusty little town of Vidal, California, where Josephine and Wyatt had once lived, or even, as Truman Fisher's article suggests, the even smaller riverfront town of Drennan, which was subsequently named Earp in Wyatt's honor after he died.

But Josephine chose none of these spots. Wyatt's sister, Adelia, was still alive, but the rest of Wyatt's brothers and sisters were gone, buried in separate locations, and as Josephine lamented, "...we had no children." Even so, Josephine decided that Wyatt Earp couldn't be buried alone.

Wyatt needed to be laid to rest with family nearby, Josephine reasoned. And since placing Wyatt in the ground next to members of his

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Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

16, 1929. From left to right, the first Fred Dornberger; Tombstone mining Clum; silent film cowboy William S.

family didn't seem to please her, Josephine decided to bury Wyatt with members of her own. And so, with that decision, the ashes of one of the West's most famous and controversial gunfighters were destined to be interred in a Jewish cemetery, the Hills of Eternity Memorial Park, in Colma, California, just south of San Francisco.

But Wyatt's ashes didn't find their way to the cemetery in Colma immediately.

"...I had gone with him [Wyatt]" Josephine said, "on every trail he had ever taken since those days at Tombstone long ago." And even though it must have been very difficult for her, Josephine insisted on taking Wyatt's ashes "home" herself.

"With eyes blinded by tears, I tenderly wrapped the urn, with its precious contents, in several soft towels and put the package in an overnight satchel. I traveled from Los Angeles to San Francisco on the fast daylight train, the *Lark*. If other passengers happened to notice the little old lady in the black traveling suit, holding tightly to a satchel too dear to let the porter carry, they probably

The American Indian

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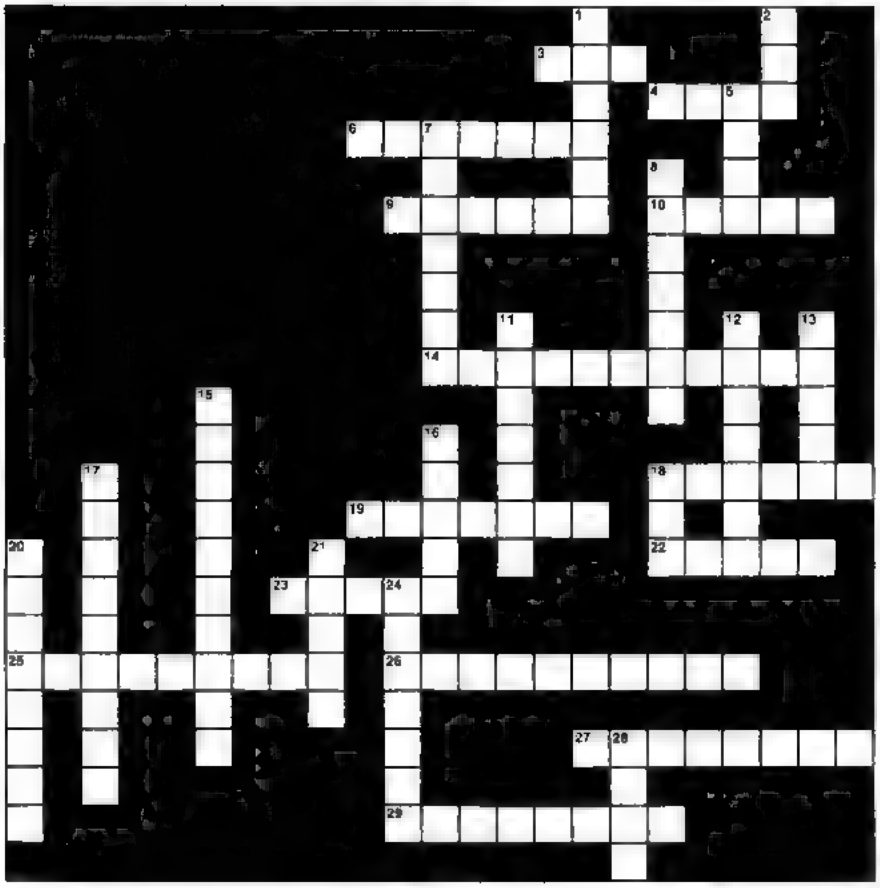

Across

3. Wyatt Earp pallbearer
4. Wyatt Earp pallbearer
6. Home of the Hanging Tree
9. Author of *Doc Holliday: A Family Portrait*
10. The son of Belle Starr and Jim Reed
14. Killed by Crow Dog
18. Father of American embalming
19. Surviving Oatman brother
22. Caught Procopio Bustamente
23. Wyatt Earp pallbearer
25. John Horton _____
26. "Russina Bill"
27. Josiah G. "Doc"
29. George _____ Scarborough

Down

1. Wyatt Earp pallbearer
2. Mike Sughrue's twin brother
5. Killed Soapy Smith
7. Isaac _____ Parker
8. Jesse & Frank's mom
11. Cabinet makers often built them
12. "Little Bill"
13. "Tulas Jack"
15. Chris Madsen's family home
16. founder of St. Johns, Arizona
17. Author of *Soiled Doves*
18. Hamilton Butler Bell
20. Wyatt Earp pallbearer
21. Clay Allison's father
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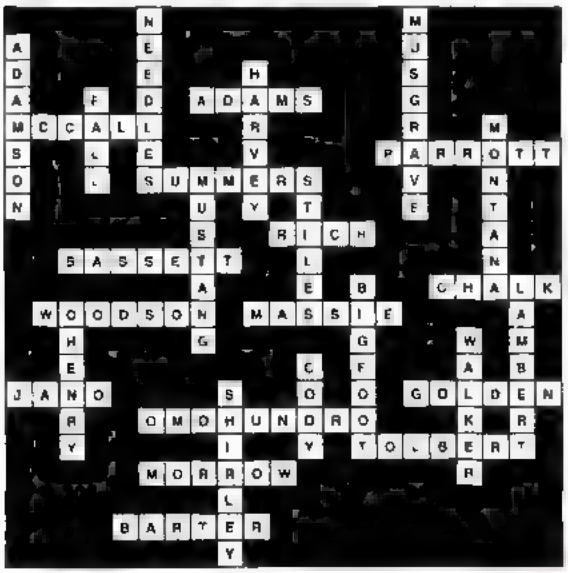

Solution in next month's True West.

Solution to last month's puzzle.

thought that it was just some queer old granny. Little could they divine the heartache I carried in my breast on that last journey of love. I placed the satchel protectively between me and the window. We had spent a lifetime traveling—now we were making our last journey together."

What Josephine and *I Married Wyatt Earp* neglected to mention, however, was that this heart-wrenching journey didn't occur right after Wyatt's death. It occurred six months later.

Wyatt Earp died on January 13, 1929, but as the Register of Burials at the Hills of Eternity Cemetery shows, his ashes were not placed in the ground until July 18, 1929!

So it turns out that even in death, Wyatt Earp left one last controversy: why did it take Josephine six months to bury him?

It may just be that Josephine couldn't bear to part with Wyatt any sooner. But unfortunately, we'll never know the answer for sure.

Josephine Earp spent the rest of her life fighting with Stuart Lake's editor about the contents of *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, threatening to sue Hollywood movie studios over the motion picture that was based upon the book, battling the fabrications of hack writers, and opposing anyone who dared to tarnish Wyatt's image.

Josephine died in Los Angeles of a heart attack on December 19, 1944, and sadly, she died practically destitute and all-but forgotten. In stark contrast to Wyatt's funeral, less than a dozen friends and relatives attended the ceremony which was held for Josephine. No long lines of people came to pay their last respects to Wyatt Earp's wife, and the only celebrity on hand was the tall, aging movie cowboy William S. Hart.

And so Josephine Earp, as irascible and as devoted to Wyatt Earp as ever, followed her husband into the grave. And, apparently, she took the secret of her long delay in burying Wyatt's ashes with her.

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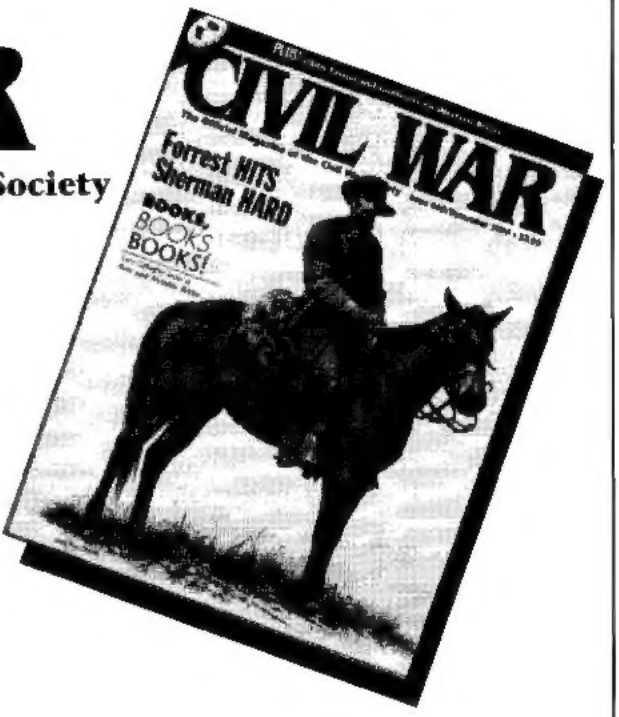

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